University of Alberta

The Other Elizabethan Settlement: The Virgin Queen as *Materfamilias*, 1548-1603

by

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Abstract

Traditional narratives of the life and reign of Elizabeth Tudor have focused on her relationships to statesmen, to the detriment of her relations with the members of her household. The primary aim of this work is to re-examine Elizabeth's relationships with these intimates, illuminating her construction of an *ersatz* family within the cultural structure of her court. In particular, this work frames Elizabeth's privy chamber as a locus of intimacy within the court, reaching beyond the narrowly political to examine the weight of access, familiarity, and the management of display, all of which were within the considerable purview of Elizabeth's attendants. Employing critical and sociological theory to interpret the interaction between Elizabeth and her intimates, this study ventures through the closed door of the privy chamber, and nearer a complete picture of the Elizabethan court. This study builds on recent women's historiography in examining the careers of Elizabeth's women *per se*, focusing not on their exclusion from official political power, but on the substantial agency that was unique to them and was, indeed, denied to many of Elizabeth's statesmen and courtiers. This paper proposes a revitalized contribution to the analysis of court culture, and was composed with the aim of providing fresh insights into Elizabeth herself, as well as the careers of early modern elite women.

Acknowledgments & Dedication

This thesis is the result of two years' challenging and surprisingly pleasant research, writing, and personal growth, and would not have been possible without the care and support of others.

I would like to first offer my thanks to my supervisor, Professor Julian Martin. His guidance and support – not to say patience – have made me a uniquely lucky student. It was Professor Martin who first sparked my love of Tudor history, and he has shepherded me through this process with kindness, insight, and grace.

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Courtney Thomas, currently completing a PhD at Yale University, trod this path before me and has been a vigilant editor and a very good friend throughout this entire process.

Without my fiancé, Michael Chalk, this achievement would have been impossible. He has stayed up nights, brought me everything I needed, and loved me in all weather. His kindnesses have been innumerable, and I am thankful to have the rest of my life to attempt to repay them.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, Patte Jordan Huberman, and my second mother, Jan Chalk. My mom knew I could do this before I did, has given me unfailing encouragement, love, and support, and has made me the person I am. Mrs C has confounded every caricature of the putative mother-in-law, always astounding me with her love and generosity. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to these two formidable and extraordinary women.

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Introduction:

Defamiliarising the Virgin's Narrative: The Curious Case of Elizabeth Tudor

Elizabeth Tudor, despite never marrying or having children, occupied a considerable series of familial roles throughout her lifetime: she was a daughter, a sister, a governess, a mother figure, a grandmother figure, and ultimately, as I will argue, a patriarch. Her natural family was, however, of more symbolic than practical use in these role negotiations. Her mother died when Elizabeth was an infant; her father, Henry VIII, was a distant figure and, later, valuable rhetorically as a powerful subject of filial emulation. Elizabeth only rarely shared households with her sister Mary or her brother Edward, and her relationships to them were, in any case, largely more political than intimate. It was, then, those whom she chose for her households, those who surrounded her physically and participated in an *ersatz* familial interaction with her, who enabled and enhanced her self-performance, allowing her to actualize intimacies on both political and non-political levels.

In this study I mean to assign a new texture of *familia* to Elizabeth's traditional narratives and the life of her court and household. In contrast to (and, later, in the absence of) her natural family, Elizabeth created a family around her, beginning late in her childhood and lasting in evolving forms to her death. This thesis takes the form of a conventional chronology of Elizabeth's life between the years 1548-1603, with the lens looking away from the well-rehearsed public events that shape her historiographical presence. I will focus instead on her careful establishment of household and close relationships, and by extension, the role of intimacy at the Elizabethan court. The centre of the work will be Elizabeth's career as Queen of England, and in particular, her place as "the center of the center"[1] of her court and household.

Such an examination, however, would be incomplete without first placing Elizabeth and her court within a wider European context, drawing broad comparisons and contrasts to both greater and lesser courts during the early modern period. This pan-European royal court portrait will emphasize the extent to which Elizabeth's household was the fruition of her personal choices and her necessarily unique style of governance. I also consider Elizabeth's household as Princess (particularly following her expulsion at age fifteen from Katherine Parr's home in Chelsea), the mechanisms by which Elizabeth marshalled her staff, servants, and friends, and the early astuteness that she exhibited in choosing her intimates.[2]

By providing these contexts, both of contemporary European trends and of Elizabeth's own care in forming a household at such an early age, I propose to demystify Elizabeth's choices as Queen, and illuminate her household and privy chamber as natural evolutions of both her character and her unique circumstances.

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[1] Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books 1983), p. 129.

[2] This astuteness is a characteristic often attributed to Elizabeth when studying her ministerial and state appointments – "the Queen's most infallible judgement of men" – but rarely extrapolated to include her ladies and household officers. See Eunice H. Turner, "Queen Elizabeth I and Her Friends", *History Today* 15:9 (1965), p. 619.

This work also applies a social analysis of architecture to the spaces in which Elizabeth lived and moved, employing the floor plans of her palaces and the simulacrum of public and private spheres that dictated the form and flow of Elizabethan court life. Physical barriers enhanced by human barriers, the stratification of which were in part Elizabeth's own creation, underscore both the importance of and the premium placed on access to the sovereign. This was a role in which Elizabeth was more isolated than most, having neither consort nor children nor surviving siblings. The 'access analysis' employed to examine medieval palaces is a valuable tool for assessing trends in early modern architecture and court life. I will show that the centre of Elizabeth's court was increasingly defended by "'a syphoning process' comprised of systems of rooms and doors"[3] as well as ushers, chamberers, and Ladies of the Bedchamber, serving to make Elizabeth more remote physically, while other innovations made her more visible on cultural and magisterial levels.

My particular interest in undertaking this research is the examination of Elizabeth's "symbolic universe", an invaluable mechanism of Elizabeth's own construction that conferred legitimacy upon her court and her rule while also deftly supplanting the role of a family by the creation of a *familia*, a group of intimates readily identifiable from Elizabeth's adolescence onwards. For this reason my work will reach beyond the empirical purviews of much historiography to employ the work of other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, finding epistemological grounding in sociology, anthropology, and critical theory. Exploring mechanisms of universe-building, legitimation, and self-performance will move the court beyond the realm of the strictly political and bring the historian closer to the "tight-knit and profoundly human environment"[4] of the court itself. "Social reality becomes legitimate not because it expresses accurately the commonly held values of a society but because it *defines* those values through its ability to construct virtually all forms of knowledge that we have concerning social reality."[5] Defining central value systems is a necessary undertaking for any new sovereign; the majority of them, however, do so by means of inheritance and the codified expectations of the institution itself. This was not possible for Elizabeth at her accession for a myriad of reasons. Elizabeth's traditional narrative is steeped in lore and legend, and as a result it is easy to overlook how strange her circumstances were, how accidental and unintended her accession was. Not only was she disadvantaged by her gender and the circumstances surrounding her birth, she also sought – in the eyes of her contemporaries – to put herself at a further disadvantage by her conduct and her choices as Queen, namely her ultimate refusal to marry or declare a successor. I do not seek to explore the political implications of these decisions, but rather the impact they had on the culture and the structure of the court itself. In this way the concept of a symbolic universe becomes at once more useful and more valuable, because the court of an unmarried regnant queen was forced to leave aside many of the organic systems inherent in the interaction, performance, and functions of its early modern royal counterparts.

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[3] Amanda Richardson, "Corridors of Power: a case study in access analysis from medieval England", *Antiquity* 77:296 (2003), p. 375.

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[4] Paul E. J. Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31:1, p. 79.

[5] Courtney Thomas, "Queen Anna of Denmark: Social Roles, Political Agency and Gender Expectations at the Jacobean Court, 1603-1619", Unpublished MA Thesis, Department of History and Classics, University of Alberta (2005), p. 3.

The work of the sociologist Erving Goffman provides particular insight into the examinations of role expectations and self-performance at Elizabeth's court and within her household. Goffman approached interaction through the lens of dramaturgy, emphasizing the understanding of all parties in a given setting of roles, expectations, obligations, and social positioning. Performance is, Goffman explains, a constant, organic function of the self and of institutions: it is neither piecemeal nor selective, nor is it accidental or lacking in construction, whether or not this construction is conscious. "The self-image available for anyone entering a particular position is one of which he may become affectively or cognitively enamored, desiring and expecting to see himself in terms of the enactment of the role and the self-identification emerging from this enactment."[6] Elizabeth entered and exited a stratified sequence of cognitive roles, each based both on the reality of her current circumstances and upon the self she wished to project. It is in this capacity that the individuals with whom she chose to surround herself become of such paramount importance: these men and women were engaged as "living props"[7] to define Elizabeth even as they defined themselves through her, as well as through the knot of kinship and factional networks of which they were inextricably a part. The role of a living prop is one of a 'non-person', one who enhances the projection of the central performer in a given *montage*. The living prop has no audience except inasmuch as she is part of the performance of another: she is seen by the audience without being the subject of its attention, part instead of the rhetoric of imagery that the central performer attempts to convey. As Princess, for example, while weathering scandal, danger, and disgrace, Elizabeth enlisted individuals to create a setting in which she could project an unthreatening portrait of purity, piety, modesty, and learning, while simultaneously acting as a 'charismatic leader' to both her followers and her attendants.[8]

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[6] Erving Goffman, "Role Distance", in *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961), p. 89.
[7] See Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

Elizabeth's ladies and household officers were not, naturally, confined to the roles of living props, just as Elizabeth's own role was not confined to that of Princess, or later, of Queen. Elizabeth's legitimation as Queen depended heavily on this collection of individuals. Her first task as an unmarried, female sovereign was to create a conceptual machinery that would empower her rule; in other words, a "symbolic universe". This task, as stated, was uniquely difficult for Elizabeth, as the precedent set by her sister Mary was one with limited utility, for its short length, its differing circumstances, and its many failures. The concept of a regnant queen brought with it many complications for the structure of the court and of her household, leaving aside the widespread belief even amongst her allies that a woman could not rule alone. Henry VIII had established his privy chamber, taking cues both from his father Henry VII and from his slavish imitation of the French court, as a venue for highly visible politicking and camaraderie: among the members of his chamber were privy councillors, peers, Garter Knights, and other pillars of the political nation. Not only was this structure impossible under

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[8] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 122.

Elizabeth, as her privy chamber was of necessity composed almost entirely of women, but it was a mechanism that she rejected. Her privy chamber was instead a cocoon at the centre of the court, by design at least, one that worked to emphasize the illusion of a private sphere, utilizing both the dendritic physical structure of Elizabeth's apartments and a series of household positions that incrementally divided Elizabeth's bedchamber and surrounding arenas from the other more public areas of the court.

The role of the privy chamber is central to this thesis, as the privy chamber itself was central to Elizabeth's *familia*. Traditional and even recent historiography has dismissed Elizabeth's chamber, and its personnel, as "a glorified domestic staff".[9] Devoid of conventional political power,[10] the chamber is characterized as atrophied, disregarded by court contemporaries, and without importance *per se*. Several studies have focused on the political agency and influence of the Elizabethan privy chamber *via* informal channels, suggesting rightly that the early modern court was governed by a "politics of intimacy", and that privy chamber personnel were used as conduits for currying favour with the Queen. On the present-day historiographical landscape, however, this limited political capacity marks the end of interest in the privy chamber. My design is to illuminate the multi-faceted and very real importance that the privy chamber itself, as well as Elizabeth's interpretation of it, as exercised within the structure and quotidian cultural life of the court. Also of import are the members of the privy chamber themselves, inducted as they were into Elizabeth's *familia* and put under her guardianship. The pattern of appointments throughout her reign demonstrates that Elizabeth employed the privy chamber to keep her kin and her old friends close about her at court. The evolution of appointments and lengths of tenure also illustrate the chamber as a venue where friendships were made and broken, and where intimacy was cultivated in a more genuine form than it was anywhere else at court. The right of *entrée* to the privy chamber throughout the reign is a reliable – perhaps the most reliable – barometer of who was closest to Elizabeth, and provides a dependable list of those to whom she chose to act as lover, [illegible]ent, or confidante. As such the importance of the privy chamber reaches beyond the confines of narrowly-defined politics and provides invaluable insight into Elizabeth's character as a fundamentally human sovereign, as well as supplying a window through which historians can view the evolution of her self-performance, both in display and behaviour.

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[9] John Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture Under the* Ancien Régime *1500-1750* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p. 109.

[10] Political power was, in any case, "not a monolithic and uniform entity ... It flowed through an array of channels ranging from the institutionalized and official, to more informal and flexible avenues." Thomas, "Queen Anna of Denmark", p. 14.

Chapter One:

Role Expectations, Deference, and Rights of Entrée at the Early Modern Royal Court

All aspects of early modern court culture were enhanced and contextualized by the presence of a royal family, which acted as both a complement to and a forcefield around a sovereign. These functions are borne out by pictorial, ceremonial and literary sources throughout the sixteenth century and beyond, and constitute one of the most compelling reasons that Queen Elizabeth I, the only sixteenth century European monarch above the age of majority who neither married nor had children, continues to be such a consistent subject of historical scholarship. Unlike her father, Henry VIII, or her sister, Mary I, whose reigns were both in large part characterized by anxiety over the succession and the impact that this anxiety had on marriage and family, Elizabeth went no further than negotiation on the direct route to traditional monarchical family life. Instead, the exclusive population that flanked her personally and politically was a rotating group of carefully selected individuals, both men and women, who served the purpose of amplifying her display, solidifying her sovereignty, and providing her with companionship – in other words, they deftly typified the conventional tropes of a royal family. Elizabeth's filial and familial isolation gave this group a natural promotion and advantage at court in terms of royal access and influence. A survey of family life in early modern European courts, as well as the role expectations and presumptions of behaviour and deference that accompanied them, will illuminate the importance of Elizabeth's *familia* and underscore the emphasis and deliberation with which it was constructed.

In establishing the singular nature and characteristics of Elizabeth's household and court as those of a regnant queen, we must also account for the situation of the kingdom that she ruled. England, Ireland, and Wales were still relatively unimportant lands on an early modern pan-European scale: the argument over the balance of power in Europe was played out between France and the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs, who controlled much of the European continent. England had lost her last foothold on the continent when France reclaimed the port of Calais in 1556. Elizabeth's status as a monarch without consort, children, or surviving siblings also contributed to this relatively miniaturized impression of the English court. Ireland, an infamously contentious territory since the twelfth century, was governed by a succession of English deputies, in competition with feudal Irish nobles, with varying success. Wales was the traditional seat of the heir presumptive upon his or her adolescence, or whenever it was convenient for the sovereign to place someone there: under Henry VII, Prince Arthur had ventured there for his first lessons in governance with his new wife, Catherine of Aragon, in 1501; under Henry VIII, Princess Mary had been sent to Ludlow in 1525 as Princess of Wales (at the age of nine) in order to make a general statement regarding her legitimacy and marriageability.[11] Elizabeth, naturally, had no children to send to Wales, and as such no one was sent.

These observations are significant in comparing England – and particularly Elizabethan England – to other European royal courts in the sixteenth century for two reasons: first, the English government, as a relatively minor power, had no satellite courts; and second, Elizabeth, without consort or children, had no satellite households. This was highly unusual in contemporary European terms, where the norm was that "the ruler's household was only the nucleus of a wider environment" of royal structure and governance.[12] Children and grandchildren were given households of their own upon adolescence – in 1535, the French *dauphin*'s household numbered approximately 300 people, half that of his father François I – and siblings of the sovereign were provided courts to govern protectorates and provinces, as Maximilian II had appointed his brothers Karl and Ferdinand.[13] Although secondary courts and households could foment rivalry and power contests, "it remained habitual for [royal family members] to have their own households and palaces."[14] These outposts of the sovereign's government also provided officers, courtiers and others with venues other than the ruler's court to consolidate networks and influence. Elizabeth, then, was the sole royal household convenor of a single court: this both reduced the numbers of those in power, and by their dearth made both political and household appointments more valuable at court. It also elevated the entourages of royal favourites and the heads of noble families in England, as these households had no competition in the form of secondary royal figures.

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[11] Ann Weikel, "Mary I (1516-1558)". *Dictionary of National Biography.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[12] Joroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003), p. 48.

[13] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, pp. 48-49.

[14] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, p. 48.

The early modern royal court was "a whole society in miniature", its central objective being "the glorification of the king."[15] The person of the sovereign was, therefore, the fulcrum on which the entirety of court culture and activity turned, so much so that the suggestion of the monarch, even in his absence, was powerful enough to drive court ceremonial.[16] Investment in the sacralization of the sovereign was investment in a cultural understanding that benefited all those who gained entrance to the court itself. Participation in court ceremonial was thus a measure both of a courtier's rank and his or her access to the monarch, and as such stood as a powerful gauge of influence. Ceremonial, seen *per se* as arbitrary and meaningless, was in pre-revolutionary Europe the guardian of privilege, rank, and distance, reinforcing the political nation both within and without the court.

William Beik and Emmanuel le Roy give texture to the importance of access, and argue that courtiers were not simply blank faces orbiting the sovereign:

> People organized themselves according to personal rivalries, to be sure, but also according to family loyalties, religious predilections, social status, friendship, ideological viewpoints and professional status. Their connections were multilateral and came in varying degrees of intensity. They evolved over time. There was no simple 'royal faction'.[17]

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[15] Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 70.

[16] See Neville Williams, *All the Queen's Men: Elizabeth I and Her Courtiers* (1972), p. 19, for a description of the public dumb-show that was enacted by the Queen's household during meals, events that attracted enormous audiences despite Elizabeth's preference, and tendency, to take her meals in her private quarters.

[17] William Beik, Review: "The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration," *Past and Present* no. 188 (2005), p. 205.

Such an assertion raises two points. First, courtiers' manners and methods of organizing themselves at royal courts each had a locus in the person of the ruler, who was their excuse for gathering. Secondly, this very real tangle of connections and associations among courtiers – through family, professional association, rank, or friendship – complicated and reinforced the need for control over access to the sovereign. Such revelations only underscore the accomplishment of European court culture in the sixteenth century: while courts became at once more dense and more interwoven, distance and deference were given ever greater pride of place, indicating not the sovereign's lone need or weakness, but the active collaboration of all who held a place at court. "Government was characterized by negotiation, compromise, and sharing of resources in a manner which maintained and supported hierarchical differences."[18] That these developments were so marked throughout Europe during the Renaissance indicates that it was not only Elizabeth Tudor who needed to establish political and iconographic legitimacy. From her predecessors and from her European contemporaries, Elizabeth inherited a machinery of deference that had reinforced the positions of rulers ostensibly far more powerful than herself.

After Assumption Day in 1548, the Spanish Habsburg household of Prince Philip, later Philip II, grew by more than two hundred. Assumption Day marked Charles V's alteration to Spanish court life which, while called strictly Burgundian, in truth took cues from both Burgundian and medieval Castilian cultural sources. The change absorbed the emperor himself, as well as his heir, deeper into the court, making them less accessible to courtiers or the public, while simultaneously undermining whatever status remained to them as private persons. Meanwhile, at the Valois court, *soli regi gloria* ("glory only to the sovereign") became the watchword, emphasizing power based entirely on one's degree of association with regal figures at court.[19] This comparison underscores the greater trend during this post-medieval, pre-revolutionary period, because otherwise the Habsburg and Valois courts stand in contrast to one another. While the Spanish put their emphasis on withdrawing the sovereign from public view, hoping to elicit a sense of omnipresence rather than absence, the Valois and eventually the Bourbon kings raised public ceremonial to a degree that ultimately became unbearable for them, let alone their audiences.[20] But early modern influence was a matter of status more than economic power or other phenomena, and ceremonial and court ritual were the guardians of that influence. No matter how tedious it may have seemed to them – given the example of the Countess de Genlis, who said, "One went only unwillingly to Court, and complained aloud when one had to" – the nobility were invested in ceremonial as much, if not more, than the monarch: "If it had hitherto been the prerogative of a duchess to be seated in the presence of the queen, it was deeply mortifying to duchesses to see others of lower rank likewise seated."[21]

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[18] *Ibid.*

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[19] Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 88.

[20] By the eighteenth century, Louis XV "retreated to his private apartments to escape the ceremonial burden." *Ibid*, p. 93.

[21] Both quotations taken from Norbert Elias, "The Changing Functions of Etiquette," *Civilizations, Power, and Knowledge: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 88.

Proximity to the sovereign, the centre of court influence, was a "major concern of Renaissance kingcraft,"[22] for both the sovereign and his courtiers. Court service was a career with the potential to cripple financially:[23] while a court office-holder might earn more than a subject who was employed privately, this was the early modern equivalent of the modern-day London weighting allowance, in which any difference in pay was often poured into a dearer lifestyle. Furthermore it was also commonplace for courtiers and ministers to pay out of pocket in service to their positions and statuses at court: Sir Francis Walsingham died in considerable debt, having personally financed his *cadre* of international spies in service to Queen Elizabeth. That so many courtiers found themselves willingly in such positions is no mystery, however: wealth *qua* wealth had no place in the status-seeking ambitions of the *ancien régime*. Norbert Elias argues, in a discussion of aristocratic houses, that grand display was in the job description of the elite:

> High rank entails the duty to own and display an appropriate house. What appears as extravagance ... is in reality the seigniorial ethos of rank. This ethos grows out of the structure and activity of court society, and is at the same time a precondition for the continuance of this activity. It is not freely chosen.[24]

In short, "[a] duke must build his house in such a way as to tell the world: I am a duke and not merely a count."[25]

The desire for access was no novelty of the early modern period, but deliberate evolutions in court ceremonial up to the eighteenth century made such access far more difficult, and as such far more valuable. The medieval and early Renaissance courts were far more warrenish than their later counterparts, their centres far less defended. The medieval French court was a venue in which "'*toutes manières de gens*' approached the ruler when he left the chapel, and his companions attended *lever* and *coucher* without much ado".[26] A growing population in and around the royal court in the early modern period dictated the need for an increasingly bureaucratic and regulated approach to rank, duty, and privilege within the palace. Still, numbers continued to rise at court as if unchecked: the king's *maison* in France, for example, went from an already considerable 600 members under François I to 1,049 members by 1560 under François II.[27] The sovereign, however, occupied the increasingly insulated centre of court life, and in a political culture in which "power was contingent on access and the ability of the royal servant to initiate and maintain a familiar relationship with the prince",[28] competition for access grew at courts throughout Europe during this period. The ruler was "the center of the center", providing the origin stories and justifications for the hierarchies and stratifications that benefited all within proximity of the centre of power.[29]

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[22] Curtis Perry, "The politics of access and representations of the sodomite king in early modern England", *Renaissance Quarterly* 53:4 (2000), p. 1056.
[23] See R.C. Braddock, "Rewards of Office-Holding in Tudor England", *Journal of British Studies* (1975), pp. 29-47.
[24] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 53.
[25] Elias, *The Court Society*, p. 63.

Imagery was also a powerful mechanism for the construction of awe and deference, as well as establishing the place of the sovereign within his or her court and amongst the government's elite. Elizabeth herself, as part of a campaign of filial emulation that will be discussed in later chapters, "liked to stage herself before the imposing image of her father that dominated Holbein's great wall painting of the Tudor dynasty."[30] The great Tudor cartoon provided a context for her legitimacy and offered a mantle of majesty that she could don before ambassadors and other visitors. The carefully staged family portrait, seen in many different royal incarnations throughout the sixteenth century, is an excellent barometer by which to gauge both the insulation and the singular importance of the sovereign as early modern trends reached their peak and were discarded. Henry VIII's other commissions, such as *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession* and *The Family of Henry VIII*, were heavily laden with dynastic symbolism, betraying his anxiety concerning the continued success of the Tudors' still-new tenure.[31]

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[26] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, p. 22.
[27] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, p. 31.
[28] Jason Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", in S. Doran and T. Freeman (eds), *The Myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), p. 224.
[29] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 129.

Portraits commissioned by other courts relay different attitudes and confidences regarding sovereignty. An anonymous miniature of François I, dated approximately 1530, clearly notes the king in the centre of the image, but he is surrounded by men, including his three sons, who are not only wearing hats, but are also not focused on him, watching instead Antoine Macault read his Greek translation of *les Trois Premiers Livres de Diodore de Sicile*. The layout of human traffic in this image connotes an almost nonchalant view of French rule, an assumption that its long-standing dynasty could not come under threat.

This portrait has a second, illustrative significance: it was not only the ruler who required legitimation through ceremony and display, but the ruling dynasty as well.

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[30] Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 20.

[31] On *The Family of Henry VIII*: "The composition ... derives ultimately from that of a Virgin and Child enthroned flanked by standing saints, the central group in this instance being the King with his third Queen, Jane Seymour, in her role as mother of the heir apparent, the future Edward VI. These three are separated by elaborate columns from the two princesses, Mary to the left and Elizabeth to the right, both wearing dresses with long trains." Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I* (1987), p. 49.

François is seen here with his three sons; similarly, the aforementioned allegorical portraits commissioned by Henry VIII alternately place him not only with his parents, whose marriage united the houses of Lancaster and York to found the Tudor dynasty, but also with Jane Seymour, who provided a Tudor heir. Such images, far from being simple family portraits, were displays of both legitimacy and dynastic perpetuation along Old Testament lines. King James I wrote:

> In the Scriptures, Kings are called Gods and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Divine power. Kings are compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriae*, the politique father of his people.[32]

Thus arraying a ruler's family about him in portraiture had allegorical as well as practical potency.

The royal family provided countless occasions for ceremonial display, shows of magnificence and piety that reinforced the claims of monarchy. Every major event in the life cycle – births, baptisms, weddings – constituted a visible and palpable affirmation of the current regime and its continuity. Even theatre celebrated and reinforced family events in the service of the dynasty. In Portugal in 1502, Gil Vicente wrote *Auto de la visitación*, a play celebrating the birth of a royal child. "Vicente himself, dressed as a cowherd, stands in amazement at the splendour of the court, salutes the Queen, extols the birth of the Prince and introduces other rustics who, in the style of the mumming, enter with country gifts."[33] Such plays "were written for one performance only, and the royal personages in the audience are included within the action of the piece."[34] Siblings, consorts, and children were the primary insulation that surrounded a monarch, both confirming his or her legitimacy and protecting him or her from external forces. Queen Elizabeth remained on the tide of court fashion – visual, ceremonial, and structural – but was not buttressed with the intermediary layer of a family: her familial emulation and reference were of necessity derivative. For what she could not accomplish by conjuring the memory of her father and grandfather, she used her *familia* instead, men and women of her own choosing, and her privy chamber in particular served the functions of both family and household officers.

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[32] Simon Schama, "The Domestication of Majesty: Royal Family Portraiture 1500-1850." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17:1 (1986), p. 165.

[33] J. E. Varey, "The Audience and the Play at Court Spectacles: The Role of the King." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 61:4 (1984), p. 400.

Geertz suggests that it is the insulation surrounding the monarch – "stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances" – that provides both symbolic and practical proofs of elite status, that the visibility of and, simultaneously, the barriers around a sovereign indicate legitimate governance.[35] Nowhere is this more marked than in the marshalling of the simulacrum of distinction between public and private spheres. Norbert Elias identifies six gradations of *entrée* into the privy chamber or "seemingly private chambers" of, for example, Louis XIV: the first right of access to the royal presence was family, or the king's consort and children.[36] The second right, by this measure, was given to the chief officers of the king's chamber and of his wardrobe. Facing more stringent regulation were members of the nobility and ministers of state. The importance of the right of *entrée*, and where one fell within these and other gradations of access, grew exponentially in European courts throughout the sixteenth century, as the French, Spanish and English courts imposed the ceremonial evolutions described above that championed nuances of hierarchy and emphasized the distance between the sovereign, his family, and his court.

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[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 124.

[36] Elias, *On Civilization, Power, and Knowledge*, p. 84.

Nevertheless, the household itself remained a constant and central fixture of the European court throughout the fluctuations and evolutions of the sixteenth century: "household service to the king and his family was the basic function of the court long before it became a centrally important political institution ... one of its central functions thereafter."[37] It was partially owing to its physical growth, but more to its increasingly dominant status as a site for symbolic fanfare, whether seen (in the case of the French and Henrician courts) or unseen (as in the Spanish Habsburg and Elizabethan courts), that the privy chamber's standing within the royal court grew so exponentially throughout the early modern period. Elizabeth's status – first as a disgraced princess, and then as a regnant queen – necessitated that she be surrounded by women who, in her unusual circumstances, acted as "living props" to her self-performance,[38] able protectresses, mothers, sisters, and friends. Where Elizabeth had no family, her waiting women substituted, providing her not only with companionship and care, but redefining the role of the English sovereign's apartments, cocooning Elizabeth and themselves – ostensibly at least – against the subjectivity and unpredictability of court politics.

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[37] Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 70.
[38] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

Chapter Two

'The Old Flock at Hatfield': Elizabeth as Charismatic Orphan, 1548-1558

It was during the reign of Edward VI, when she was fifteen, that Elizabeth Tudor first managed a household in earnest. She had been removed from the home of her stepmother Katherine Parr some months previous, a household in which she had lived for more than a year, and the closest approximation to a conventional family experience – including a mother-figure, a father-figure, and children in the same household – that she would ever take part in. It was during this period, turbulent as it was, that Elizabeth was first able to establish consistency in her surroundings, playing prismic familial roles to a group of people who were not members of her natural family. The construction of her household was undertaken with security, loyalty, and affection as goals; and where her relationships with members of her immediate family were compromised and often dangerous, her demeanour towards the members of her household, and their behaviour towards her, remained constant not only through this period, but to their deaths. It was with this eye to reciprocity and deference that Elizabeth would construct her *familia* throughout her lifetime, and thus her household management as Princess is a valuable object of study. A thorough examination of Elizabeth's adolescent years, when she played the often contradictory roles of daughter, sister, and governess, enlightens the study of her household later in her life, and provides a rational basis for her imperatives and her behaviour.

It is difficult to assess the construction of Elizabeth Tudor's household, particularly during the critical years 1548-1558, without deviating away from the household and into an elaborate but necessarily speculative psychological profile of Elizabeth herself. Her practical circumstances, as well as her personal situation, could not parallel those of her brother Edward or her sister Mary, and indeed were anomalous in the contemporary world of royal children more generally. Princess of Wales and heiress presumptive only for the first three years of her life, Elizabeth was in a dynastic and familial limbo for the eight years that followed her mother's death; even after she was restored to the succession by a 1544 Act of Parliament, she remained the younger sister — a distant third in a race of three. Edward was the heir to the crown; and Mary, having been Princess of Wales throughout her childhood – and holding the conviction that she remained England's only heir into her adulthood – was not only the elder sister, but had an entourage and political interests of her own at court. These factors, coupled with her disputed legitimacy, made Elizabeth's place and future, therefore, more diminutive and less certain than those of her siblings.[39]

Despite the convulsions at court during the last decade of Henry VIII's reign, however, Elizabeth's households at Hatfield and Ashridge remained relatively stable: "[these] were quiet and (to the best of anybody's knowledge) happy childhood years for

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[39] For example, during the reign of Edward VI, "Elizabeth was given no cloth of estate. Mary, on the other hand, had been provided with two in *her* loan of furnishings from the royal wardrobe. The cloth of estate or canopy was the mark of royal status. ... Mary, as heir to the throne, was accorded this symbol of royalty; Elizabeth, as only 'the second inheritor in remainder to the crown', was not." David Starkey, *Elizabeth: The Struggle for the Throne* (2000), p. 97. It should be noted, however, that during Mary's reign, when (in default of children) Elizabeth was the heir to the throne herself, she was still not afforded a cloth of estate.

Elizabeth, spent in pleasant places with affectionate friends around her."[40] It was during these early years that Elizabeth cultivated her affinity for lifelong servants and companions: her household in the 1530s employed many of the same people who would be afforded significant positions at court upon her accession in 1558, including her wet-nurse, Blanche Parry, later Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber and Mistress of the Jewels; Blanche's brother Thomas, who would become household Comptroller; and Katherine Champernowne, later Ashley, who as Elizabeth's governess oversaw the first modules of her education, and was Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber from Elizabeth's accession until Katherine's death in 1565.

In an era of tight familial and hierarchical connections, Elizabeth has been acknowledged as unusually steadfast to 'old servants' even by early modern standards.[41] It was such loyalty and stability that Elizabeth favoured over strict competence: during the *melée* surrounding Thomas Seymour's arrest in 1548, Elizabeth's interrogator Sir Robert Tyrwhit remarked that 'Her love for Ashley ... is to be wondered at'. Thomas Parry has been described as "a fat, self-satisfied Welshman"[42] whose accounting skills were questionable at best: his books were 'so undiscreetly made that it doth well appear he had little understanding to execute his office.'[43] The cost of keeping Parry in her service was high, as Elizabeth trusted him, but not his account-keeping. Elizabeth was, famously, a micro-manager in her household: she checked Parry's account-books religiously, as can be seen by her signature at the bottom of each page.[44] Katherine Ashley likewise was characterized as risking Elizabeth's own security with her gossiping and machinations. That Elizabeth prized consistency over capability was "one of the few sentimental streaks in her character",[45] but it cannot be understood as strictly sentimental: there were obvious practical implications as well.

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[40] Alison Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth: The First Twenty-Five Years of Elizabeth I* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1971, 1999), p 67.
[41] Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays in Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 28-29.
[42] David Starkey, *Elizabeth: The Struggle for the Throne* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 77.
[43] Sir Robert Tyrwhit as quoted in Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*, pp. 120-121.

This loyalty was often reciprocated. In 1554, when Elizabeth was imprisoned in the Tower of London following the Wyatt Rebellion, several members of her household were imprisoned as well, both for suspected treason and for "heretical opinions". Sir John Harrington and his wife Isabella Markham were among those in her service who were in the Tower at the time. During this year he wrote to Stephen Gardiner, Chancellor to Queen Mary until his death in 1555:

> I know of [no deed of evil], save such duty to the Lady Elizabeth as I am bounden to pay her at all times ... My wife [Isabella Markham] is her servant, and doth but rejoice in this our misery when we look with whom we are holden in bondage. Our gracious King Henry did ever advance our family's good estate as did his pious father aforetime; wherefore our service is in remembrance of such good kindness, albeit there needeth none other cause to render our tendance, sith the Lady Elizabeth beareth such piety and godly affection and virtue. ... Mine poor lady [Elizabeth] hath greater cause to wail, than we of such small degree, but her rare example affordeth comfort to us, and shameth our complaint.[46]

At a time when open loyalty to Elizabeth was a byword for treasonable intent, Harrington's letter is an extraordinary testament to Elizabeth's treatment of her household. He concludes:

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[44] Agnes Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth* (London: J.M. Dent & Co, 1906), p. 54.
[45] Starkey, *Elizabeth: The Struggle for the Throne*, p. 77.
[46] As quoted in Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, pp. 82-83.

> If you [Gardiner] should give ear to my complaint, it will bind me to thankfully repay this kindness; but if not, we will continue to suffer, and rest ourselves in God, whose mercy is sure and safe, and in all true love to her [Elizabeth] who doth honour us in tender sort, and scorneth not to shed her tears with ours.[47]

When Elizabeth established herself as governess over her own household in 1548, at the age of fifteen,[48] many of the characteristics of the so-called 'non-political' aspects of her reign had their beginnings. In the light of the events that punctuate the traditional narratives of Elizabeth's life – her mother's arrest and execution; her kickline of stepmothers; scandal and exile at the hands of Thomas Seymour; her own imprisonment following the Wyatt Rebellion – the priority that she placed, as Queen, upon privacy, upon the decorum of her household, and upon the consistency and longevity of those in her service, become predictable and natural outcomes rather than mysteries. Elizabeth spent the entirety of her upbringing in the defense of her reputation against the spectre of her mother. In 1549, Thomas Parry testified that even such a character as Thomas Seymour expressed fears regarding Elizabeth's maternal inheritance: "No, quoth he [Seymour], that shalbe when I am gon to *Boleyn*, and he said afterwards, no Words of *Boleyn*."[49]

This defensive stance was not only employed for the benefit of courtiers and the greater public, however, but to her own family, particularly her father and her sister. Before she actively presented herself as an heir to the crown, which cannot but have been only after the deaths of Henry VIII and Edward VI, Elizabeth aimed to establish herself as a pious, learned young woman, and in particular, as a good daughter and sister. Agnes Strickland called this "the semblance of the most perfect humility" when the prospect of succession was still "a vista far remote".[50] The sociologist Erving Goffman, who examined social interaction and presentation within a dramaturgical context, illustrates how individuals cater their presentation of self to the pursuit of greater goals: "we find often that the personal front of the performer is employed not so much because it allows him to present himself as he would like to appear but because his appearance and manner can do something for a scene of wider scope."[51] In spite of Strickland's analysis, there is no evidence, beyond her rigorous application to her studies, that Elizabeth harboured childhood or even adolescent ambitions of becoming Queen. However, presenting herself as a pious princess, and cherishing her place in the succession, had an equally important "wider scope" during this era: it placed her firmly within a family under circumstances in which a family setting by contemporary standards was unavailable to her. By these means she could also situate herself, and her household, within the political nation, regardless of pretensions to the crown.

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[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Thomas Parry's audit numbers Elizabeth's household at approximately 140 in 1548.

[49] As quoted in Sheila Cavanagh, "The Bad Seed: Princess Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident", in Julia M. Walker (ed), *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 21.

"When Elizabeth came to the throne at the age of twenty-five – indeed, as a condition of her accession – she was without surviving close male kin."[52] The truth is that she had no surviving close kin at all, male or female. In his unfinished *History of Britain* Francis Bacon wrote,"inasmuch as she had no helps to lean upon in her government, *except such as she had herself provided*; no own brother, no uncle, no kinsman of the royal family, to share her cares and support her authority."[53] Even when her siblings were alive, what remained to Elizabeth were the servants who had raised her, and cousins on both sides of her family, whom she would keep close and in her service throughout her lifetime. Prior to her accession, Elizabeth had six ladies of honour who resided with her at Hatfield House. Sir John Harrington, around 1553, wrote a poem in honour of these six women:

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[50] Agnes Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 16.
[51] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 77.
[52] Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Gender, Authority and Representation*, p. 15.

> *The great Diana chaste,*
> *In forest late I met,*
> *Did me commend in haste,*
> *To Hatfield for to get;*
> *And to you, six-a-row,*
> *Her pleasure to declare,*
> *Thus meaning to bestow,*
> *On each a gift most rare.*[54]

This poem is one of the earliest instances, if not the earliest, of the ascription of otherworldly powers to Elizabeth: that is, that as Diana, she was able to bestow gifts of character on those she deemed deserving.[55] At least three of these ladies – Isabella Markham, Elizabeth Norwich and Elizabeth St Loe, later the infamous Countess of Shrewsbury – would remain figures in Elizabeth's household for much of their careers, and in many of their cases, until death. Such odes and parables were common offerings to reigning monarchs, but very rare for other members of the royal family; Elizabeth in particular, whose favour with her sister was extremely changeable and whose chances of inheritance were outside at best, was a peculiar choice for such outpourings.

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[53] As quoted in Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, p. 16. Emphasis added.
[54] As quoted in Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, pp. 42-43.
[55] According to Strickland, Harrington praises Isabella Markham's modesty and beauty, Elizabeth Norwich for goodness and gravity, Elizabeth St Loe for stability, Lady Willoughby for "being a laurel instead of a willow", and Mrs Skipwith for prudence.

By necessity, then, Elizabeth was, before her accession, the 'charismatic leader' described by Norbert Elias: '[the charismatic leader] must more or less consciously direct the aims of all the people forming the central group of his rule *in one direction*, holding together a limited number of people within a generally disintegrating and unbalanced society in such a way that their combined pressure acts outward on the wider dominion."[56] By Elias's estimation Elizabeth required a crisis to provoke her own ascendancy: in this specific case, the combination of an unpopular foreign war, the reimposition of Catholicism by force, and the void provided by Mary's childlessness together provided the crisis. However, Elizabeth's case is unique, as one cannot state with any certainty when she began consciously behaving as an heir to the throne, and this lack of certainty is due in no small part to the consistency with which Elizabeth marshalled her household – or, in the cases of interrogation or imprisonment, what her stated wishes were regarding her household. Elizabeth's political *cachet* was as a Protestant figurehead; prior to the death of Edward VI in 1553 there was no need for such a spectre, and under Mary it placed Elizabeth in positions of frequent discomfort. Her role in the view of the court was uniquely unstable prior to her accession: it rode on her father's favour, whether for herself or for her mother; the dispositions of her various stepmothers; the affection of her brother and the machinations of his protectors; and the needs and suspicions of her sister. Elizabeth's status within the succession and within her family "fluctuated even during her father's lifetime," and as such, "she would never have been able to presume unequivocally that it would be honored after his death."[57]

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[56] Elias, *The Court Society*, p. 122.

Throughout these fluctuations the prerogatives and imperatives of Elizabeth's household, as decided by her, remained the same: she required specific company in the form of the Parrys, the Ashleys and some chosen few others; and she required the uninterrupted continuance of her education. In 1555, for example, following her tenure in the Tower of London and her house arrest at Woodstock, her first priorities upon restoration at Hatfield House were the return of Katherine Ashley and the Parrys to her service, and that her tutor, Roger Ascham, come "to see her and read with her whenever he could get a leave of absence."[58] Elizabeth's household provided her with the only mechanism by which she could assert control and consistency; and although she did not attempt to recreate Hatfield at Whitehall when she became Queen, these imperatives remained, on balance, unchanged.

That she asserted these requirements in reaction to the fluctuations and convulsions of her family is a central component of this thesis; that the cast of characters who aided in establishing the household stability that Elizabeth sought did not in any era include her immediate family is also informative. Her personal and dynastic identification with her family was a powerful force in her character and her rhetoric: "[with] her mother, her relations were early and strong[; with] her father, they were late and strong." However, "[in] between, there was a gap that represented most of her childhood", and "into the void had stepped her servants and officers ... They were fixed points in a changeable world and on them her security depended."[59] A case can be made that the exception to this alienation was Katherine Parr, who has been called Elizabeth's "only powerful and disinterested friend"[60] prior to her death in 1548. However, there was no member of her immediate family who had not at one juncture threatened her security, whereas the household she cultivated, when she was permitted to govern it, was an arena that provided both consistency and stability.

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[57] Cavanagh, "The Bad Seed: Princess Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident", in Walker (ed), *Dissing Elizabeth*, p. 9.
[58] Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*, p. 191.

Elizabeth's household also provided a venue for royal dramaturgy, whatever her fate in the line of succession. Hatfield House and Ashridge were her two principal residences, under ordinary circumstances, prior to her accession in 1558, and both of these were organized with a mind to display and regality, if not the bald magnificence that was an imperative in the theatre of power that she constructed during her own reign.[61] Elizabeth's apartments modelled Henry VIII's conceptualisation of his palace privy chambers; her great halls served as main dining areas for servants and members of the household, following the English tradition of reciprocity and elite hospitality. Elizabeth exhibited as Princess similar preferences to those she expressed as Queen, and would join her servants at meals "only on high days and holidays."[62] She also had withdrawing chambers and presence chambers, where she received visitors, and these chambers were managed and guarded by ushers, gentlemen and yeomen.

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[59] Starkey, *Elizabeth: The Struggle for the Throne*, p. 77.
[60] Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*, p. 103.
[61] See Anne Somerset, *Ladies-In-Waiting: From the Tudors to the Present Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 60: "In order to provide a setting worthy of a great Queen, its visual impact must be stunning, and the presence at court of large numbers of ladies-in-waiting was an indispensable element in the scenario." Such a setting was unnecessary and even dangerous in the household of a princess or an heir-in-waiting. Starkey rather compares the atmosphere at Hatfield and Ashridge to "an Oxbridge college".
[62] Starkey, *Elizabeth: The Struggle for the Throne*, p. 95.

Katherine Ashley managed Elizabeth's privy chambers in similar fashion, although on a smaller scale, to her management of the royal chambers after Elizabeth's accession. These rooms, including Elizabeth's bedchamber, were "a female realm", where Elizabeth took many of her meals, and to which only her ladies had access.[63] Interestingly, the only men allowed past the boundary of the privy chamber were Elizabeth's tutors, William Grindal and Roger Ascham. "Men were admitted here only on sufferance and ... they were excluded utterly from her bedchamber."[64] Such exclusivity underscores the importance of Elizabeth's female attendants: "[her] body servants were as much of a barrier to male courtiers as the walls and doors of the privy chamber".[65] The work of Erving Goffman is instructive here from several angles. Goffman espouses the importance of control of the 'stage':

> It is often felt that control of the setting is an advantage during interaction. In a narrow sense, this control allows a team to introduce strategic devices for determining the information the audience is able to acquire.[66]

The exclusion of men from Elizabeth's bedchamber asserted such a control, making the area a 'backstage' rather than a 'front region' in Goffman's lexicon, a private space, inasmuch as 'private' can be understood in contemporary elite terms. It also fostered a collusion between Elizabeth and the female attendants who had access to her bedchamber: because of its backstage, exclusive nature, Elizabeth's ladies were privy to aspects of her character and behaviour that were hidden from more public view. This collusion, naturally, was only reinforced by the fact that all of the players in question were women. Such a setting, and the rules that governed it, can only have made Thomas Seymour's frequent early-morning intrusions into the bedchamber at Sudeley Castle during Elizabeth's adolescence more indecorous, as he perforce upset the governance, by Elizabeth and her attendants, of Elizabeth's self-performance. During her interrogation in 1549, Katherine Ashley reported that

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[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] Jason Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", in S. Doran and T. Freeman (eds), *The Myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), p. 226.

[66] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, p. 93.

> After he [Seymour] was maried to the Queene [Katherine Parr], he wold come many Mornings into the said Lady *Elizabeth*'s Chamber, before she were redy, and sometyme before she did rise. And if she were up, he wold bid her good Morrow, and ax how she did, and strike hir upon the Bak or on the Buttockes famylearly, and so go forth through his Lodgings. ... And if she were in hir Bed, he wold put open the Curteyns, and bid hir good Morrow, and make as though he wold come at hir. And she wold go further in the Bed, so that he could not come at hir. And one Mornyning he strave to have kissed hir in hir Bed: and this Examinate [Ashley] was there, and bad hym go away for shame.[67]

From a backstage, ostensibly a place of secrets, Seymour turned Elizabeth's bedchamber into a front region, forcing performance upon the players. Elizabeth's response to this invasion of privacy is revealing: instead of being in her bed and vulnerable when Seymour came to call on her, her strategy became to anticipate his visits by being awake, dressed, and at prayer by the time he arrived. Thus the backstage was sacrificed, but the performance was not, an exchange that Elizabeth can be seen to make with relative consistency throughout her reign. Indeed, when one of her ladies, Mountjoye, spoke openly of marriage between Elizabeth and the Admiral, Elizabeth is said to have told her "that she would have her thrust out of her presence if she did not desist."[68] Such unguarded talk risked the team's performance and Elizabeth's own self-presentation, and thus could not be countenanced. Elizabeth's concern also indicates her acknowledgment that her 'backstage' had been breached. Such a tight grip on the mechanics of display has been repackaged as arbitrary venom, violence and bitterness on Elizabeth's part during the 1590s, when several of her women married without permission or became pregnant. It is readily understood that in 1549, talk such as Mountjoye's constituted a significant practical threat to Elizabeth, not only to her freedom, but to her reputation in the longer term. In the 1590s, such threats were of a different scope but were nonetheless as real, for Elizabeth herself and for her women.

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[67] As quoted in Cavanagh, "The Bad Seed: Princess Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident", Walker (ed), *Dissing Elizabeth*, pp. 12-13.

Elizabeth laboured under an isolation from her parents and siblings that trumped the already considerable formalities and patterns of deference inherent to the families of ruling dynasties, and as such never played a role within a backstage 'team' alongside members of her own family. In terms of collusion and 'teams', no cast of characters is more constant than that of her privy chamber, both before and after her accession. In fact, Elizabeth herself made direct reference to this when Thomas Parry and Katherine Ashley were in prison following Thomas Seymour's arrest in 1549. In a letter to the Duke of Somerset, then Lord Protector, she makes plain her prismic view of her own family situation, and of her parents in particular:

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[68] Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 25.

> I am the bolder to speak for another thing; and the other was, because, peradventure your lordship and the rest of the council will think that I favour her evil doing, for whom I shall speak, which is Kateryn Ashley, that it would please your Grace and the rest of the council to be good unto her. ... First, because that she hath been with me a long time, and many years, and hath taken great labour and pain in bringing me up in learning and honesty; and, therefore, I ought of very duty to speak for her; for Saint Gregorie sayeth, 'that we are more bound to them that bringeth us up well than to our parents, for our parents do that which is natural for them that bringeth us into this world, but our bringers up are a cause to make us live well in it.' ... The third cause is, because that it shall, and doth make men think, that I am not clear of the deed myself; but that is pardoned to me because of my youth, because that she I loved so well is in such a place.[69]

Here Elizabeth speaks more or less directly to her status as an orphan; and not only this, but to the orphaned state under which she laboured in practical terms throughout her childhood. Writing this letter at the age of fifteen or sixteen, Elizabeth was in a difficult position: Katherine Ashley was the most constant maternal figure of her childhood, and the one to whom, by her own testimony, she was closest. However, following the death of Katherine Parr and Elizabeth's establishment of a household in her own right, Elizabeth was also responsible for Ashley's welfare in a manner that mirrored Ashley's own responsibility to Elizabeth. Regardless of any compromise of this *ersatz* mother-daughter scenario, it is clear that Elizabeth valued the protection of both her establishment and her own reputation in equal measure. Katherine Ashley was a member, perhaps the chief member, of Elizabeth's 'team': her imprisonment constituted not only a personal loss to Elizabeth, but a compromise of her projection and display, by which her reputation for honour and piety were made secure. Elizabeth was aware that simply clearing her own name in the Seymour affair was insufficient: in order to make her innocence complete and impregnable, as it were, those closest to her had to be publicly exonerated as well. Interestingly, in this same letter, she pleads the case of John Ashley, Katherine's husband, "which because he is my kinsman".[70] Elizabeth's affinity for her maternal relations (of which Ashley was one), being as they were unfettered by claims to the crown, was a constant throughout her lifetime.

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[69] Princess Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, March 7, 1549, in Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (editors), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 33-4.

This rationale as well plays into her behaviour as Queen when she grew older, which I will explore in greater detail in subsequent chapters. That her own conduct be beyond reproach (and it often was not) did not complete her personal security; nor did it secure her reputation *per se*. The men and women she elected to keep close to her must also be above scrutiny, not only because of their proximity to her, but because of her guardianship of and responsibility for them while they resided at court. On a smaller scale, the same was true at Hatfield House and Ashridge before her accession, when the maintenance of her reputation was scarcely less important.

There is little choice when attempting to select an iconic portrait of Elizabeth as princess; the vagaries of being the third heir, and a daughter at that, dictate that a priority was not placed on images of her. Fortunately, the portrait available to us is telling enough. Attributed to William Scrots and thought to be completed in 1546, when Elizabeth was twelve or thirteen, it echoes many of the values that would be touchstones for Elizabeth and her household in the coming decade, and, in many ways, throughout the rest of her life. Elizabeth is shown at three-quarter length standing beside a lectern; even so, she is holding a book, one finger marking her place. Her clothing and jewellery make plain that she is royal, but her expression is neutral. It has been remarked that this is the first and last sexualized portrait of Elizabeth, as it shows the outlines of her breasts where later portraits betrayed nothing other than the rigid straight lines of Elizabethan corsetry.[71] Thus at once she is a model of piety, scholarship, and modesty, but not in the pursuit of perpetual virginity: this portrait is of a marriageable young woman.

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[70] Steven W. May, *Queen Elizabeth I: Selected Works* (Washington Square Press 2004), p. 113.

The figure in the Scrots portrait is the one that Elizabeth sought to remain during the reigns of her brother and sister: circumspect, learned, and diminutive; and her household aided and enabled this display. During the major convulsions of the coming decade, Elizabeth's first sign of having fallen from favour was the removal of her household, a move that suggests that her attachment to her ladies, to Katherine Ashley and her husband, to the siblings Blanche and Thomas Parry, was on one hand tied deeply into her sense of stability, and on the other was widely known. Sir Robert Tyrwhit calculated in 1549 that if Ashley and the Parrys were removed from her service, Elizabeth would crumble under interrogation; such was the common understanding of their closeness. That she did not crumble – that she indeed rescued both herself and her servants, rather than exchanging one for the other – did not disabuse Tyrwhit of the affection that Elizabeth held for her servants. Rather it prompted him to write desperately to Lord Protector Somerset: "I do very beleve that ther hath been some secrett Promys, betwyne my Lady, Mestrys Aschlay, and the

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[71] David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649*, p. 102.

Cofferer [Parry], never to confesse to Deythe; and yf yt be so, yt wyll never be gottyne of her, but ether by the King's Majesty, or ells by yowr Grace."[72]

Such was the 'team' that Elizabeth constructed around her following her father's death in January 1547. By this reciprocal loyalty, Elizabeth wore the mantle of a 'charismatic leader', even when she was aware that it was dangerous to do so. When she became Queen she was hardly in a safer place; indeed, she was subject to new and different dangers. In the summer of 1548 Elizabeth wrote to Thomas Seymour that she was "not a friend won with trifles, nor lost with the like", and the foundation for such a view was painstakingly laid throughout her years as Princess.[73] The implications it would have for her household during her reign – and, indeed, her manner of governance – are countless. Unknown to her household or her government, and possibly to herself, the intimate circle that Elizabeth formed around herself as Princess would remain the template for her *familia* throughout her lifetime, more critical both to her personally and to her success as a monarch than she or anyone close to her could have anticipated.

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[72] As quoted in Cavanagh, "The Bad Seed: Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident", in Walker (ed), *Dissing Elizabeth*, p. 22.

[73] Princess Elizabeth to Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral (Summer 1548), in Marcus, Mueller, and Rose (eds), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, p. 19.

Chapter Three:

Pathways, Architectural Arteries and the Physicality of the Queen's Apartments

The intimacy that characterized Elizabeth's relationship to her household and waiting women, first as Princess and later as Queen, was abetted by the spaces in which she lived and moved. There has hitherto been an impression, both historiographical and contemporary, that building without regard for symmetry was 'typical' of Tudor architecture. Annibale Litolfi, a Mantuan who visited Queen Mary's court, noted that 'As for the rooms, there is no imaginable order, as the English look merely to convenience', building to suit internal needs rather than conforming to predetermined external façades.[74] From architectural resources, however, including those enumerated here, it is plain that 'convenience' in the Tudor lexicon meant the manufacture of distance, and that symmetry – apart from magnificence or display – was put to the purpose of stratifying the human traffic of the court, constructing both a suitable regal awe and a suitable impression, at least, of privacy.

Elizabeth I was not responsible for the construction of the many palaces and great homes that she traveled between, though in the latter case, jockeying for her favour, particularly on progress, inspired the construction of many country seats.[75] Henry VIII, who ultimately owned more than sixty homes whether *via* construction, renovation or acquisition, provided a considerable architectural inheritance; and Elizabeth's contribution to the spaces in which she moved owed more to her unique situation as an unmarried regnant queen than it did to any zeal for building or renovating.[76] Nevertheless the physical structure of her court took cues from that of Henry VIII and evolved along with the rest of Europe from a venue for aristocratic camaraderie to a vehicle emphasizing the visibility and, simultaneously, the inaccessibility of the royal person. Walls, doors, and concentric layers of space contrived to separate Elizabeth and a chosen few intimates from the rest of the clamouring court population. Physical barriers were reinforced by human barriers, standing at every door and guarding the queen from petitioners as she processed to chapel on holy days; by the cocoon of women who guarded each chamber leading, ultimately, to the Bedchamber, to which only Elizabeth, her four Ladies of the Bedchamber, and an exclusive rotation of favourites and ministers had access.

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[74] Ian Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1962), p. 91.
[75] See Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*; David Howarth, *Images of Rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

It was Elizabeth herself who made the critical distinction between the Privy Chamber and the Bedchamber, a method by which she could provide another layer of insulation for herself and trusted intimates. Simon Adams identifies this change as having taken place soon after Elizabeth's coronation in 1559, though he dismisses it as one of several "minor changes to Court organisation" under Elizabeth.[77] David Starkey emphasizes the importance of this barrier: the creation of the Privy Chamber at the beginning of the sixteenth century "put a frontier within the palace and established an equally clear line of demarcation between those royal servants who could cross it and those who could not."[78] Any elaboration of such a demarcation must be heralded with close attention.

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[76] Elizabeth was a considerable contributor, in fact, to the state of disrepair and decay into which English castles in royal hands was to fall throughout the sixteenth century. "As great private houses proliferated, the sovereign on progress tended to rely more and more on aristocratic hospitality and less and less on the doubtful comforts of the royal castles." H.M. Colvin, "Castles and government in Tudor England." *The English Historical Review* 83:327, p. 231.

[77] Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: 2002), p. 28.

Elizabeth's goal of 'cocooning' her household within the court was complemented by late medieval developments in architecture: interior palace structures increasingly supported the control of access. Examination of the palaces used by Elizabeth is particularly interesting because so many of them were relatively new, thanks to Henry VIII's lavish building sprees.[79] Whitehall Palace and Hampton Court Palace provide valuable case studies in the early modern conception of access control, as they underwent specific renovations in the 1530s.[80] Although Whitehall – York Place until 1530, when it was confiscated from Cardinal Wolsey following his failure at Blackfriars – was built in the thirteenth century, it remains representative of Tudor aims in architecture owing to the nature of its sixteenth-century remodeling. The King's Lodgings, which Elizabeth would later occupy, got particular attention, and the goal, from what the renovation suggests, was the creation of a hierarchy of access in the suite of the royal apartments.

Prior to 1530, York Place was the traditional London seat of the Archbishops of York. It is only owing to Edward I taking up residence between 1303 and his death in

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[78] David Starkey, "Court History in Perspective", in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (1987), p. 4.

[79] "As a result of the windfall revenues of the dissolution of the monasteries, the king was able to set a standard of building that none of his successors was able to approach." See Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*, Chapter Three: "The Tudor and Stuart Courts 1509-1714", p. 97.

[80] See Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*; Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments, 1240-1698* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).

1307 that the palace was equipped at all to accommodate a consort or children; following this brief tenure, it passed back into ecclesiastical hands.[81] Henry VIII's reconstruction of the principal apartments and their surrounding areas are telling of increasingly deliberate sensibilities in the architecture of the ruling classes, which seem to have been specifically directed at controlling the flow of human traffic. Access to the monarch "'was carefully controlled ... through a syphoning process' comprised of systems of rooms and doors"[82]. Henry took Wolsey's own apartments for the King's Lodgings, alongside the hitherto disused Queen's Lodgings further east towards the Thames.[83] Wolsey had had all the rooms necessary for a king's suite: a great chamber, a presence chamber, and a privy chamber, assigned willy-nilly off the east end of the Privy Gallery Range[84] on the first floor.[85] Henry, reassigning the palace to accommodate not only himself, but an entire court, created a series of small bedchambers, dining rooms and dressing areas directly off the Privy Gallery Range and an attached perpendicular gallery closing off the west side of the privy garden; this second gallery later became Elizabeth's Banqueting House. Henry also completely altered the order of what was now the royal apartments.

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[81] Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, pp. 3-4.

[82] Amanda Richardson, "Corridors of Power: a case study in access analysis from medieval England," in *Antiquity* 77:296 (2003), pp. 373-84 at p. 375.

[83] The following information is interpreted from floorplans in Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments, 1240-1698*. This interpretation is based on a comparison of three floorplans based on excavations: the first from 1530, before the palace was surrendered by Wolsey (p. 40); the second from 1547 at Henry VIII's death (p. 63); and the third showing renovations to the first floor between 1558 and 1603 (p. 66).

[84] Rosalys Coope remarks that the use of the term 'gallery' is an imprecise one: "the accounts quoted for Eltham Palace between 1518 and 1528 mention five 'galleries' and the accounts of 1524 two more. One of these is clearly a chapel-gallery and one is named as the king's 'privy gallery ... in the vicinity of his bedchamber ... ' The character of the remainder is uncertain, although the plan of the palace suggests that some were external, cloister-like structures." It was in fact Henry VIII and Wolsey who first introduced the "long gallery" in England, at Whitehall and Hampton Court. Coope, "The gallery in England: names and meanings." *Architectural History*, Vol. 27 (1984), pp. 446-7 *passim*

[85] Note that the term 'first floor' is here being used in the English sense, meaning the floor above the ground floor.

Wolsey's bedchamber had been the first room off the Privy Gallery; Henry's renovation made this a Withdrawing Chamber. This was one side of a suite of rooms that became, by Henry's design, ultimately cocooned from all directions. The Withdrawing Chamber was the south buttress; to the east lay the queen's apartments; to the west, the privy gardens. The northernmost part of the palace contained the Great Hall on the ground floor, from which stairs led to a Great Chamber on the first floor. Henry turned the Great Chamber into a Guard Chamber, thus insulating his apartments from the north entrances. Floorplans show that while the Privy Gallery Range served as a conduit by which one could enter any of the courtiers' bedchambers constructed there, only the king's Withdrawing Chamber, Presence Chamber and Guard Chamber could be accessed from higher-traffic areas such as the long galleries and the Great Hall. The doors to his bedchamber and closet could only be accessed from one of these barrier rooms. The setup of the new Queen's Lodgings was largely similar, and excavations have shown that precisely the same designs were being carried out in the privy chambers at Hampton Court Palace at this time:

> Now there were five rooms in the sequence and not four. The presence chamber, under Wolsey, followed the watching chamber but the next room became the dining chamber rather than privy or withdrawing chamber ... The room following this then became the withdrawing chamber rather than the bedchamber as under Wolsey ... Thus the addition of the bedroom in the new tower had given Henry an extra room in the sequence. This was of great importance because it meant

> that the king was afforded greater protection from the court than before.[86]

The renovations to Whitehall and Hampton Court in the sixteenth century could be used as quintessential case studies in 'access analysis', specifically, the increasing preference for the dendritic or 'tree-like' pattern over the annular or 'ringy' pattern in high-status household construction.[87] The annular pattern is unregulated in its design: there is no apparent strategy governing the situation of rooms, doors, or pathways. The dendritic pattern, by contrast, is almost concentric in structure, using a periphery of rooms and doorways to protect the room placed in the centre. Dendritic patterns can also employ a sequence of rooms and doors suggesting increasing restriction of access. This is precisely the strategy that Henry VIII, by all implications, used in the remodeling of both Whitehall and Hampton Court.

Fiona Kisby deconstructs the royal chapel as an example of how distance, difference and deference were manufactured by both ceremonial and physical space. The royal chapel, she explains, had no nave, but rather a 'holyday closet' on the first floor, from which staircases led to the main body of the chapel.[88] Thus the King and Queen could observe services, and could be seen to observe, from a place of almost greater prominence than the pulpit itself; there was a "raised tribune or gallery at the end of the chapel, which further elevated and concealed the king", which served both to distance the monarch from the rest of the congregants, be they ever how many or few;

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[86] Simon Thurley, "Henry VIII and the Building of Hampton Court: A Reconstruction of the Tudor Palace," *Architectural History* 31 (1988), p. 5.
[87] Richardson, "The Corridors of Power", p. 374.
[88] Fiona Kisby, "'Where the King Goeth a Procession': Chapel Ceremonies and Services, the Ritual Year, and Religious Reforms at the Early Tudor Court, 1485-1547", *Journal of British Studies* 40:1 (2001), p 49.

and to increase the "sacral status" of the sovereign in the eyes of beholders.[89] Much of the spectacle and ceremonial in the royal chapel took place, in any case, before a select audience; even chapel officers had differentiated – and in every case limited – access to the royal person.

The structure of the palace played a great role in the "journey to the chapel" undertaken by the sovereign on holy days: the monarch acted as a focal point amongst officers of the household and key members of the nobility. The chapel closet, linked to the private apartments, led the sovereign on a route through the privy chamber, into the Presence Chamber, past a Great Chamber, through a gallery, and from thence into the chapel. This journey provided rare opportunities for petitioners to make personal entreaties to the sovereign; it was the responsibility of accompanying gentleman ushers to ensure that "no maner man ... to bill, ne to approche nigh" the monarch as he or she proceeded to the chapel.[90] This distance between the sovereign and his or her subjects provides not only a fine empirical example of the methods by which physical distance was established and access limited, but also to the 'theatre of power' that was constructed in large part by emblems of sovereignty displayed before an audience. The journey to the royal chapel required viewers to stand amazed by a show of magnificence, and the monarch was required to be seen; however, to give free access to petitioners would not only place the ruler in potential physical danger; it would also be a diminishing act, a compromise of the display. Thus architectural and human barriers performed a service that can be seen in prismic terms: they protected the person of the sovereign as well as the idea of sovereignty. This also requires one to view the usher himself, as well as household members, with a new importance.

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[89] Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 29.
[90] Kisby, "'Where the King Goeth a Procession'", p. 56.

Elizabeth, when she assumed the King's Lodgings, was if anything more insulated from court traffic than her father had been, as she had no consort. It has been suggested that the former Queen's Lodgings were kept ready with a skeleton staff for the occasional use of leading noblemen at court,[91] but renovations to Whitehall under Elizabeth show that the flow of doorways connecting the former king's and queen's apartments were blocked off.[92] Windsor Castle similarly shows the queen's bedchamber securely nestled between an exterior north-facing wall; a gallery, a dressing room, and the "Beauties Room" to the west;[93] the consort's (normally the queen's) suite of rooms covering both west and south sides, and an extensive sequence of rooms projecting eastward: one had to process from St George's Hall to the Guard Chamber, and from thence through a Presence Room, an Audience Room and a Withdrawing Room in order to reach the bedchamber. Even the privy stairs, only steps away from the bedchamber, forced one on a deliberate roundabout path through the Audience Room and the Withdrawing Room.[94] At Whitehall and Greenwich Palaces at least, Elizabeth and her entourage had direct access to the River Thames from the privy chambers, making them not only more secure – as she did not have to travel through the palace to reach her rooms, or, for that matter, to exit the palace – but, by bestowing access to these chambers upon selected favourites, endowed the Thames with the status of a "rendezvous of the elite".[95]

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[91] See Pam Wright, "A change of direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603" in Starkey (ed), *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, p. 149.

[92] See the Whitehall floorplan for the period 1558-1603 in Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, p. 66.

[93] The layout of Windsor Castle depicted in Howard Colvin's *History of the King's Works* (London 1963-82) suggests that this room was constructed between 1470 and 1509; however, the term "Beauties Room" may refer to "King [Charles II]'s Beauties", a set of portraits originally held at Windsor and eventually moved to Hampton Court.

[94] Colvin, Windsor Castle layout, *The History of the King's Works*.

The guardianship of privacy within these rooms is a great part of what makes the stratification within privy chamber personnel so important: quite apart from the Guard and the ushers stationed at every entrance, each rank of lady-in-waiting encompassed a spatial responsibility and a particular physical and aesthetic barrier that guarded not only Elizabeth, but also higher-ranking ladies in her staff. Chamberers were assigned to the Presence Chamber, traditionally the outermost and most public of the queen's apartments; Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber were encountered next, in the libraries, closets and music rooms reserved for Elizabeth's closer associates.[96] Finally, the Ladies of the Bedchamber, enjoying, as stated, a rank that was Elizabeth's own creation,[97] were the foremost guardians of the queen's privacy, as they managed her most intimate space.

The spatial and human forcefield that surrounded the sovereign was not Elizabeth's innovation, but her individual appointments, her careful ranking of personnel, and her unmarried state, so unusual in her position, ensured that even among monarchs, she was capable of being uniquely isolated from her court. There is nothing to suggest that this did not reflect her own inclination: the structure and population of the privy chamber were entirely under her direction. However, the physical and ideological distance between Elizabeth's bedchamber and the rest of the court could occasionally take on absurd proportions:

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[95] Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, p. 66.

[96] From palace to palace, equivalencies to Presence and Privy chambers should be substituted: 'audience' rooms and 'withdrawing' rooms can be taken as parallel.

[97] Wright asserts that this was one of the fundamental differences between the structure of Elizabeth's staff and that of Catherine Parr, from which it was most closely derived, creating "a definite hierarchy based on nearness of access". Wright, "A change of direction", p. 149.

> If the monarch wanted a midnight snack, relays of officials and servants ceremonially passed on the order into the stygian depths of the hierarchy; it might take an hour or more to arrive. When Elizabeth complained that the food served to her at Windsor was cold, an elaborate investigation eventually revealed that, despite the existence of innumerable kitchens in the Castle, her meals were actually being cooked in the public oven in Peascod Street, and carried half a mile to her table.[98]

It seems to have been Henry VIII who deliberately cultivated this distance between his private rooms and the remainders of his palaces, building, for example, an entirely new tower at Hampton Court in the early 1530s solely for his apartments, which included a bathroom, a library, a jewel house, and accommodations for his Groom of the Stool, who was at various points lodged either directly above the king's bedchamber, or adjacent to it. One can chart the evolution of Hampton Court from Wolsey's 'vertical' planning (the king and queen originally had lodgings on separate floors, connected by a stair) towards a physical structure that better accommodated privacy.

There was also an increasing distance between the Eltham Ordinances of 1526 and their application at court, particularly with reference to the hall at Hampton Court. The Ordinances were the result of Henry VIII's complaint that household members, 'put to board wages, [giving] themselves many times to idleness, evil rule and conversation', were 'seldom keeping in the King's Hall', contributing as such to falling standards at court.[99] The Ordinances cite the hall as a dining area for all those who could expect to be fed by the court – approximately 500 in the 1530s and 1540s. Henry VIII recreated the dining hall at Hampton Court to meet the "important obligation" of providing board to those who resided there.[100] It is clear, however, that by the reign of Edward VI this application had been long extinct, and that the hall became instead an elaborate first-floor conduit to the monarch's series of public rooms. Elizabeth later used the hall as a theatre. This is a further demonstration not only of increasing distance between the parts of the palace used by the sovereign on an everyday basis and those accessed by the remainder of the court, but establishes also a more nuanced physical interpretation of public and private, moving from the magnificent impact of a hall with an empty throne, through to great chambers, presence chambers, and other dentritic, intermediate spaces whose function was to provide a thick border, as well as a profound visual impression, between the sovereign, her intimates, and her court. Ambassadors were subjected to the best of the visual panoply, making the journey to the queen's innermost chambers well worth the wait. The German visitor Henztner reports that "In one chamber ... were the rich tapestries, which are hung up when the queen gives audience to foreign ambassadors; there were numbers of cushions ornamented with gold and silver, many counterpanes and coverlids of beds, lined with ermine, in short, all the walls of the palace shine with gold and silver."[101]

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[98] Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 208.

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[99] Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, p. 80.
[100] Howarth, *Images of Rule*, pp. 14-15.
[101] As quoted in Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 629.

The architectural preferences established by the Tudors indicate a sensibility both for the impact of grandeur and for the necessity of imposing limits on access to the sovereign's person. In the cases of both Henry VIII and Elizabeth this was, in part at least, the reflection of a personal preference "to create a clear demarcation between the privy chambers of the king, his family and the most important of court officials, and the rest of the court."[102] Henry put a library in his new tower at Hampton Court, and kept one at Whitehall as well, "presumably to to keep [them] away from the damp and continual noise of the court."[103] For Elizabeth privacy, or even a simulacrum of it, was a knottier matter, despite her single status isolating her more than a married sovereign would be. Owing to the novelty of her situation, concentric layers of protection, both physical and conceptual, became increasingly necessary: "[specific] procedures of universe-maintenance become necessary when the symbolic universe has become a *problem*."[104] While it is suggested that "English royal palace building could be conditioned by show rather than function,"[105] the more penetrating inference is that show and function were, for the practical performance of majesty, one and the same.

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[102] Howarth, *Images of Rule*, p. 13.

[103] Thurley, "Hampton Court," p. 6.

[104] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Legitimation", in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 123-4.

[105] Howarth, *Images of Rule*, pp. 14-15.

Chapter Four

Cocooned Above Strife and Hurry: the Queen and her Privy Chamber, 1558-1588

Equipped with an understanding of Elizabeth's years as Princess and of the physical spaces that she occupied, it becomes possible to deconstruct the intimate relationships that she formed during her first years as Queen. It was her household in particular that was tailored to her unique circumstances: this study offers an appraisal of the household's very real importance within the structure of the court, and how these connections evolved as she grew older. The era that began with Elizabeth's accession in 1558 and ended in the 1580s is critical to any study of Elizabeth's *ersatz* family because it constitutes the period before she began styling herself as the Virgin Queen. It is vital to be able to divorce Elizabeth herself from the supernatural features that later Gloriana imagery thrust upon her, and as such this era is particularly valuable for evaluating the role of intimacy in her household and at her court. These three decades, during which time she traversed late youth and middle age, saw Elizabeth as a fundamentally human sovereign in relation to her court, in contrast with the Vestal cult figure that she became during the long last decade of her reign.

When examining this period the historian is beset by a succession of courtship and marriage negotiations which, apart from all political considerations, carried especial import for her *familia*, the men and women she chose as her intimates. Susan Doran rightly points out that it is anachronistic to pass over these negotiations merely because the benefit of hindsight informs us that they would come to nothing.[106] We conclude too easily that because she never married, Elizabeth made an *a priori* decision never to marry, that her courtships were superficial political contrivances and little more. In truth all her household can be seen to hang on the threshold of potential marriages throughout this period, significantly altering neither its structure nor its composition, owing in part to the harbinger of a coming consort.[107]

This is also the period in which Elizabeth sought to legitimate herself as a sovereign under unique, and uniquely difficult, circumstances.[108] Goffman suggests that "A self ... virtually awaits the individual entering a position; he need only conform to the pressures on him and he will find a *me* ready-made for him."[109] This conformity, however, was not a simple proposition for a regnant queen with only a short, sharp example of regnant queens having come before her. Nevertheless the benefit of Mary's model was that many of the practical and constitutional considerations enmeshed in empowering a queen regnant now had a precedent.[110] Elizabeth was also able to observe Mary's example and pick and choose for herself what worked for a queen regnant and what did not. Presenting herself as the wife and mother of her kingdom, for example, was a gambit that Mary offered and found successful; Elizabeth exploited that rhetoric almost *verbatim*.[111] In 1559, when her Parliament made the first of its many arguments petitioning that she marry, Elizabeth responded, "reproach me no more that I have no children: for every one of you, and as many as are English, are my children and kinsfolks, of whom, so long as I am not deprived and God shall preserve me, you cannot charge me, without offense, to be destitute."[112] By the same token, Mary's repressively theocratic government had been a telling failure, as had her foreign marriage and England's consequential entanglement in foreign wars. This foretaste of the advantages and pitfalls of female rule all contributed to Elizabeth's articulation of display, within her court and among her intimates, before her Parliaments and before her subjects while on progress.

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[106] Susan Doran, "Juno versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581", *The Historical Journal* 38:2 (June 1995). It has also been suggested that William Camden has made Elizabeth's perpetual virginity problematic: "Camden's version of events provides a Jacobean representation of Elizabeth as a virgin queen, one that followed in sequence upon her earlier celebration, first as a marriageable maiden, and second as a mythically youthful object of courtly desire. An awareness of the anachronistic processes at work in the first history of Elizabeth's reign throws light on these earlier phases of Elizabethan iconography and demonstrates how the entire Gloriana cult was defined by the practicalities of Elizabethan *and Jacobean* politics." King also points out that "The manuscript version of the queen's speech [to her Parliament in 1559] records no vow of perpetual virginity; indeed, any such vow would have violated the official disapproval of all vows, including that of celibacy, by the Church of England ... " John N. King, "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen." *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43:1 (1990), p. 36.

[107] See Wright, "A change in direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603", in Starkey (ed), *The English Court*, p. 148: "... although there is no reason to believe that the Privy Chamber created in 1558-9 was in any way intended to be temporary, it is perfectly possible that the queen's expected marriage made any plans to remodel the household a very low priority – something that could wait until a new king's establishment had to be provided for."

[108] See Berger and Luckmann, "Legitimation", in *The Social Construction of Reality.* "The problem of legitimation inevitably arises when the objectivations of the (now historic) institutional order are to be transmittedd to a new generation. At that point ... the self-evident character of the institutions can no longer be maintained by means of the individual's own recollection and habitualization," p. 111.

[109] Erving Goffman, "Role Distance," in *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1961), pp. 87-8.

In rehearsals of the traditional narrative of Elizabeth's accession and her first years of rule, one finds almost no clues regarding the composition of her household, apart from major appointments. The chronologies of her selection of her privy council, her first progress through London, and her coronation provide a synopsis almost minute-by-minute; of the construction of court culture, however, little is written. Elizabeth's court and household seem to rise fully formed off the page. Nevertheless it is obvious that Elizabeth sought to keep her *familia* close to her. Her household and court appointments, more than her more diasporic state and ministerial counterparts, were characterized by the rise of certain families: the Careys and Knollyses and Radcliffes were Boleyn and Howard cousins and therefore maternal relations; the Dudleys and Sidneys were old friends. Many of Elizabeth's privy chamber appointments were from the "already ... well-defined and closely-knit group"[113] of her households at Hatfield and Ashridge: Katherine Ashley, Blanche and Thomas Parry, Isabella Markham and Elizabeth Norwich, among others, had served Elizabeth as Princess and went on to occupy prominent positions in the new royal household. "Not the least of Elizabeth's gifts was that of inspiring love and loyalty in women as well as men; and that she emerged relatively unscathed from those early, dangerous years [as Princess] may be due in no small part to the devotion of a group of attendants".[114] These attendants, almost without exception, found homes in the new queen's court.

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[110] For an expansive study of the constitutional precedents set by Mary, see Judith M. Richards, "Mary Tudor as 'Sole Quene'?: Gendering Tudor Monarchy", *The Historical Journal* 40:4 (1997).
[111] See David Starkey, *Elizabeth: the Struggle for the Throne* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).
[112] Marcus, Mueller, and Rose (eds), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (2000), p. 59. Compare this to Queen Mary's speech at her coronation: "... certainly, if a prince and governor may as naturally and earnestly love her subjects, as the mother doth the child, then assure yourselves, that I being your lady and mistress, do as earnestly and tenderly love and favour you." As quoted in Starkey, *Elizabeth: the Struggle for the Throne*, p. 131.

Apart from promoting her friends and relatives and keeping them close to her, however, Elizabeth does not seem to have paid particular attention to the assembly and structure of her household during these first years, beyond asserting that the privy chamber itself would be free from political entanglements.[115] In this absence of interest it is possible to detect a social and familial confidence that was absent both before her accession and during the last years of her life: "her unspoken intention was to live as she pleased, with the most important offices of the household going to courtiers."[116] During the 1560s and 1570s, Elizabeth fell within the demographic median of her court, and had not yet lost nor been betrayed by anyone she had chosen as an intimate. As such the structures of the household and the privy chamber were less important than the people themselves, an emphasis that would alter markedly as old friends and relations died and as Elizabeth herself grew older. In these initial years Elizabeth was, then, constructing her new identity partially in reaction to the patterns of socialization that evolved at her court, placing herself at the centre, but not as Gloriana: for years after her accession Elizabeth is readily identifiable as a young, nubile woman surrounded by men and women of like age. In later years, it becomes obvious that Elizabeth learned to protect her own identity from the changing vagaries of social realities at court, but the fact that she had not yet learned this in the 1560s – nor was the lesson yet a necessary one – makes the era an especially valuable one to study.[117]

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[113] Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays in Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 31.

[114] Eunice H. Turner, "Queen Elizabeth I and Her Friends", *History Today* 15:9 (1965), p. 622.

[115] See Pam Wright, "A change in direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603", in Starkey (ed), *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*; Natalie Mears, "Court, Courtier and Culture in Tudor England", *The Historical Journal* 46:3 (2003); Elizabeth A. Brown, "'Companion Me With

The first concern of any new ruler is to secure the legitimacy of his or her sovereignty, and Elizabeth's legitimacy, regarding both her claim to inherit and her parentage, had been problematized repeatedly since her birth not only *via* the media of gossip and public opinion, but by Parliament and English law as well. The crisis

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My Mistress': Elizabeth I, Cleopatra and Their Waiting Women", in Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (eds), *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[116] Alan Haynes, "Supplying the Elizabethan Court." *History Today* 28:11 (1978), p. 731.

[117] For an excellent discussion of subjective identity, see Berger and Luckmann, "Legitimation", in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966).

provoked when no bishop in England would crown her is a microcosmic example of the challenges she and her new government faced in establishing legitimacy.[118] John Knox's unfortunately timed *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* contains the following passage:

> See a woman sitting in judgement, or riding frome Parliament in the middest of men, having a royall crown upon her head, the sworde and sceptre borne before her, in signe that the administration of justice was in her power: I am assuredlie persuaded, I say, that such a sight shulde so astonishe them, that they shulde judge the hole worlde to be transformed into Amazones, and that suche a metamorphosis and change was made of all the men of that countrie, as poetes do feyn was made of the companyons of Ulisses, or at the least, that albeit the outwarde forme of men remained, yet shuld they judge that their hartes were changed frome the wisdome, understanding, and courage of men, to the foolish fondnes and cowardise of women.[119]

The early years of Elizabeth's reign comprised, therefore, a critical era of building loyalties within and without the court, and cultivating a performative strategy for defining the role of a regnant queen, a role that had a precedent in Mary, but not, strictly speaking, a good example. These were the very initial stages of Elizabeth creating a symbolic universe to redefine an old institution under alien circumstances, creating new ways to shelter herself and her new government by "bestowing ultimate legitimation upon the protective structures of the institutional order."[120] Elizabeth, her government, and her court had new charges with practical and symbolic force, but, as Goffman writes, "[before] a set of task-like activities can become an identity-providing role, these activities must be clothed in a moral performance of some kind."[121] Luckily Elizabeth had many opportunities to turn the governance of England into a moral performance: she was faced with the settlement of religion, inflation, corruption in the courts, and virtual bankruptcy. Goffman's argument, however, is that Elizabeth could not simply apply herself slavishly to these matters and expect universally recognized legitimacy to be a natural result. The construction of an "Elizabethan political imaginary" was therefore necessary to answer the perceived dilemma placed before her government and her people by both her womanhood and her unmarried state.[122]

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[118] See Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I* (London: Edward Arnold, 1993); G.L. Ross, 'Il Schifanoya's Account of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth', *EHR* (1908), pp. 533-4; *Calendar of State Papers - Venice*, Vol. VII: 1558-1580 (London: 1890, Kraus Reprint: Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1970), pp. 24-5.

[119] John Knox, *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women.* Geneva, 1558.

[120] See Berger and Luckmann, "Legitimation", in *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 114; pp. 119-20.

Elizabeth's most obvious early tactic in establishing her legitimacy was one of filial emulation.[123] Louis Montrose interprets *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, a dynastic family portrait that underwent several evolutions between the 1540s – when it was first commissioned by Henry VIII – and the early 1590s, by which time it had been reinterpreted to suit Elizabeth's own purposes several times over:

> This Tudor group portrait ... decenters the image of the reigning monarch; nevertheless, the eyes of the other figures are upon her. As the only living member of the Tudor dynasty, the figure of Elizabeth is positioned in the foreground of the pictorial space, closest to the spectator, and thus in the historical present. She alone looks directly at the beholder, as she gestures towards the peace and prosperity that have followed in the wake of her accession. ... The theme of dynastic succession and filial emulation is once again invoked, but now within a context that has been enlarged to include siblings and daughters. Elizabeth is said to incorporate her father's valor, her brother's virtue, and her sister's zeal.[124]

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[121] Goffman, "Role Distance", in *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*, pp. 101-2.
[122] See Louis Montrose, "Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary." *ELH* 69 (2002), pp. 907-946.
[123] See David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1986). Loades suggests that Elizabeth's emphasis on being her 'father's daughter' was "the key to much of her achievement."
[124] Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, p. 61.

Montrose raises an elementary but valuable point in this passage, essentially as a sidebar: Elizabeth was the last direct descendant of her dynasty. My object here, as previously stated, is not to explore the riddle of implications for the succession that Elizabeth's status presented, but rather to emphasize her unique isolation as a sovereign. With the death of Mary, her last immediate relative, Elizabeth was no longer charged with creating a *familia* to counterbalance the distant and often convulsive relationships within her own family, which was now an allegorical tool rather than a reality. The *familia* now stood quite alone, constituting her sole access to intimacy, and was by necessity entirely her own construction. One sees many indications that Elizabeth pursued this construction with a will. As one example, Robert Dudley – a man whose family had been at the centre of controversy and factional struggles throughout the Tudors' dynastic tenure, but who was nonetheless among Elizabeth's closest friends – was one of the first recipients of the Order of the Garter in April 1559 following Elizabeth's accession.[125] Investiture as a Knight of the Garter was an intimate symbolic rite: "The physical intimacy required to invest the Knight transforms the Queen into the Knight's valet, his body servant. There is no greater honor than that."[126] This was a reciprocal service as well, one that benefited the Queen herself as much as the honouree: accepting the mantle of Garter Knight indicated a greater pledge to the sovereign herself.

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[125] Simon Adams, 'Dudley, Robert, earl of Leicester (1532/3–1588)', *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[126] Ilse Hayden, *Symbol and Privilege: The Ritual Context of British Royalty* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), p. 145.

Elizabeth's own interpretation and evolution of the Garter ceremonies was urged on by the need for a group of men who would comprise an "institutional elite" at court (men, not incidentally, who had been robbed of the opportunity to turn physical intimacy into political advantage by Elizabeth's all-female privy chamber). There was required "an inner circle of nobility that could be graced by intimacy with the sovereign, yet not intimacy of a kind that might violate the decorum of fealty to a noble lady, bringing discredit to a female monarch."[127] The Garter ceremonies were an ideal vehicle to assuage such a need; they were, however, not the only means by which Elizabeth sought intimacy and legitimacy at court.

"It is through roles," Goffman writes, "that tasks in society are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance."[128] Through this lens, it is possible to reinterpret Elizabeth's all-female privy chamber and imbue it with its due importance: not through strictly political agency, but rather as an explanation of the mechanics of intimacy and access at Elizabeth's court and of Elizabeth's own display. Early in the reign, Elizabeth "forbade her women to participate in politics, and historians have cited this prohibition at face value without much further examination."[129] The *cachet* of the privy chamber, where *cachet* is ascribed at all, is its status as a cocoon for the women within, set apart from the otherwise political structure of the court.[130] What is left unexamined is the reciprocal nature of such protection: Elizabeth was protected by her women as much as she intended to provide protection to her. This "inner sanctum impenetrable to most of the Court"[131] encased Elizabeth and her women together, thus establishing an unavoidable intimacy and commonality of experience. As such, a functional description of the privy chamber and its place within the court provides valuable tools for understanding Elizabeth's exercise of power as well as her approach to intimacy.

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[127] Raymond B. Waddington, "Elizabeth I and the Order of the Garter", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24:1 (Spring 1993), p. 101.

[128] Goffman, "Role Distance," in *Encounters*, p. 87.

[129] Elizabeth A. Brown, "'Companion Me With My Mistress'", in S. Frye and K. Robertson (eds), *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*, pp. 131-2.

[130] See Wright, "A change in direction"; Mears, "Court, Courtier and Culture".

Elizabeth's privy chamber had approximately sixteen waged women in regular attendance at any given time, of whom four were Ladies of the Bedchamber, approximately six were maids of honour, and the remainder Gentlewomen, of higher rank, and Chamberers, of lower rank, who had the most straightforward roster of domestic duties. These are enumerated in descending order of personal access to the queen, and an examination of the individuals selected will bear out that Elizabeth chose, for her bedchamber, the women whose company she enjoyed the most, rather than following strict determinants of rank. The Gentlewomen and Extraordinary Gentlewomen were, almost without exception, those of highest rank. Extraordinary Gentlewomen were unpaid, appointed in excess of the standard sixteen or seventeen paid ladies, and were in only partial attendance in the chamber and at court. While they were designated some practical and social duties, their most critical function was as "an elite backdrop to the department, on hand to provide a prestigious show on ceremonial occasions".[132]

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[131] Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays in Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 38-9.
[132] Wright, "A change in direction", p. 151.

During the 1560s, the privy chamber was filled with Elizabeth's cousins and old friends. To put this in its most practical terms, "the king always protects and allies himself most readily with people who owe him everything and are nothing without him."[133] The chamber staff that she inherited from Mary, therefore, like her government and council, underwent tactful but firm alterations: that "Protestants with names like Knollys, Ashley, Cary, Cecil and Throckmorton replaced the Catholic Whartons, Waldegraves, Cornwallises, Babingtons, Dormers and Southwells"[134] was as true of women's appointments as it was of men's. But it was a realignment that suited Elizabeth personally as well as politically and diplomatically. Katherine Ashley, in Elizabeth's household since 1536 and Elizabeth's governess since 1547, was named Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber. Katherine, as stated, was one of several appointees to the privy chamber who had served Elizabeth as Princess; Blanche Parry was made Mistress of the Robes, and her brother Thomas Parry became Household Controller at Elizabeth's accession.

The caravanserai of the royal court was populated by more than one thousand persons at any given time.[135] Only a quarter of these can appropriately be termed 'courtiers' or 'above stairs',[136] and prior to 1660, they served at court on an approximately quarterly rotation, three months on and nine months off.[137] This observation has not been made with any specificity regarding Elizabeth's court or her household staff, and indeed Elizabeth's reputation tended to be one of peevishly refusing leave to courtiers, councillors and household officers alike. Elizabeth had a "possessive nature" and did not like to be parted from those closest to her: "In 1575 the Earl of Leicester [Robert Dudley, ennobled in 1564] reported that Lady Cobham wished to visit her husband at his country home 'to rest her weary bones awhile, if she could get leave', but he evidently considered it mostly unlikely that she would succeed in persuading the Queen to let her go."[138] Leicester was in a position to know, as his comings and goings were uniquely scrutinized by Elizabeth. Such anecdotes make a court rotation of duty an unclear proposition as it affected those in the highest household offices at the Elizabethan court; they suggest in any case that there was no strict codification to this end, or that Elizabeth – as she did with all her court appointments and their tenures – took her own advice on a case-by-case basis.

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[133] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford 1983), p. 120.
[134] Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 72.
[135] Adamson (ed), *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 96.
[136] Joroan Duindam problematizes the notion of 'above' and 'below' stairs in the context of the early modern royal court, suggesting that they present an immaterial distinction, as "their boundaries were as fragile as they were volatile." See Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, p. 39.
[137] Adamson credits Sir John Saintly and G.E. Aylmer for this observation in *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 323, n. 6.

The Ladies of the Bedchamber had more access to the Queen than perhaps any other figures at court, and Elizabeth appointed four of them at her accession. Three of them were natural choices: Katherine Ashley, Blanche Parry, and Elizabeth's first cousin, Catherine Carey Knollys. About the fourth, Elizabeth Norwich, Lady Carew, almost nothing is known, despite her having served in the privy chamber for forty years. She was a member of Princess Elizabeth's household, and became the third wife of Sir Gawain Carew; they had no children.

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[138] Anne Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting: From the Tudors to the Present Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 62.

Throughout her reign, Elizabeth appointed a *per capita* consistent and distinctive number of her Boleyn and Howard relations, by blood or by marriage, to the privy chamber. At least eight were placed in her household at her accession: Catherine Carey Knollys – Mary Boleyn's daughter and Elizabeth's first cousin – was a Lady of the Bedchamber; her daughter Laeticia (Lettice) Knollys became a maid of honour, as did Catherine and Philadelphia Carey, daughters of Elizabeth's first cousin Henry Carey, later Baron Hunsdon.[139] The younger Catherine Carey, as Countess of Nottingham, was among Elizabeth's favourite ladies, and her position in the privy chamber did much to enhance the early career of her husband, Charles Howard, Lord High Admiral.[140] Douglas Sheffield, *nee* Howard, was a maid of honour prior to her marriage, and thereafter a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber; her sister Mary Howard was also a maid of honour. Margaret Audley, appointed a Gentlewoman of the Chamber, was the second wife of Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk.[141] Similar appointments followed: Mary Shelton, granddaughter of Elizabeth's great-aunt Elizabeth Boleyn, served the queen until her death, finding great prominence in the privy chamber and at court as Lady Scudamore; Penelope Rich, *nee* Devereux, was Lettice Knollys's daughter by her first marriage, and was appointed as a maid of honour in 1581.

The Dudleys were also conspicuous in Privy Chamber appointments. Mary Sidney, Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, was Robert Dudley's sister, and Anne

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[139] Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p. 61.

[140] James McDermott, "Howard, Charles, second Baron Howard of Effingham and first Earl of Nottingham (1536-1624)". *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[141] Norfolk, who would eventually be tried and executed for treason, was Elizabeth's most prominent maternal relation and the only duke remaining in England at this time: the third Duke was Howard's grandfather and Elizabeth's great-uncle; and they shared a great-grandfather in the second Duke.

Russell, only ten years old when she became a maid of honour, would marry Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, in 1565, becoming a great favourite of Elizabeth's and, ultimately, one of the women who attended her at her death. Both Lady Sidney and Anne Russell were appointed in 1558. One could infer that the pattern would have continued were it not for the dramatic paucity of Dudleys in the next generation: the Warwicks had no children, many of the Sidneys died young,[142] and Robert Dudley had only one son, by Douglas Sheffield, prompting their secret marriage in 1574. Elizabeth's loyalty to the Boleyns and the Dudleys is confirmed nowhere better than in her appointment of Penelope Devereux as a maid of honour in 1581: Penelope, at the time of her appointment, could scarcely have been but a reminder of her mother, the disgraced 'she-wolf' Lettice Knollys, who had married Robert Dudley without Elizabeth's permission in 1578. However, as Mary Boleyn's great-granddaughter and Robert Dudley's stepdaughter, Penelope's initial advancement was secure.

From the 1558 appointees one can construct something of a demographic template to establish the predominance of continuity or change in the privy chamber throughout Elizabeth's reign. Of interest here are the women's individual connections to Elizabeth, their marital statuses, and their ages upon appointment. The first table encompasses Gentlewomen, Ladies of the Bedchamber, and Extraordinary Gentlewomen; the second enumerates maids of honour, naturally unmarried upon their appointments, and dates of marriage for those who did marry.

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[142] When Mary Sidney's eldest daughter died, however, Elizabeth bade Mary send her younger daughter, also called Mary, to court, where she was appointed as a maid of honour, and "when she came, [Elizabeth] arranged a great marriage for the girl with Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke." Turner, "Elizabeth I and Her Friends," *History Today* 15:9 (1965), p. 628.

Name	Connection	Marital Status	Approx. Age, 1558
Katherine Ashley	Princess's household	Married 1547	40
Blanche Parry	Princess's household	Single	52
Catherine Knollys	Boleyn cousin	Married 1540	32
Elizabeth Carew	Princess's household	Married ----	20
Mary Sidney	Dudley relation	Married 1551	22
Margaret Howard (Norfolk)	Boleyn cousin (by marriage)	Married 1559	20
Anne Parry	Princess's household	Married 1540	43
Elizabeth Clinton	Kinswoman; Princess's household	Married 1552	30
Margaret Howard (Effingham)	Boleyn cousin (by marriage)	Married 1535	40

Figure 1: Elizabeth's 1558 appointees - Gentlewomen

Patterns of rank are, as can be seen, far less recognizable than those of personal and familial relationship. Katherine Ashley and Blanche Parry, the two seniormost ladies in the household, were not born into titular families nor did they marry into them. The ages of these women are also revealing, and will be of particular use when examining appointees later in the reign. With the exception of Lady Effingham, the two matriarchs of the household were the eldest. The other women were, almost without exception, of an age with Elizabeth herself. As Figure 2 will show, the age range of the 1558 appointees was consistently broad, ranging from children to women in late middle age, with almost every age in between. This was a phenomenon which did not continue throughout the reign, a trend which is discussed below.

Figure 2 - Elizabeth's 1558 Appointees - Maids of Honour

Name	Connection	First Marriage	Approx. Age, 1558	Service After Marriage
Douglas (Howard) Sheffield	Howard cousin	1560	16	Yes
Katherine (Grey) Seymour	Kinswoman	1561	18	No
Mary (Grey) Keyes	Kinswoman	1565	13	No
Jane Seymour	Mary's household	None	18	N/A
Anne Russell	Unknown	1564	10	Yes
Laeticia (Lettice) Knollys	Boleyn cousin	1561	18	Yes
Philadelphia Carey	Boleyn cousin	1584	5-10	Yes
Catherine Carey	Boleyn cousin	1563	11	Yes

Fully half of Elizabeth's maids of honour in 1558 could be called children; none married below the age of sixteen. It is interesting to note also that Elizabeth by no means forced these women to make the transition from maid of honour to spinster.[143] Jane Seymour, the only maid of honour not to marry, died in 1561 at the age of twenty. Three-quarters of these appointees were Elizabeth's relations, two of whom – Katherine and Mary Grey – were putative heirs to the crown. The Grey sisters' marriages were matters of national security as well as structural sensitivity within the privy chamber and the court itself, and as such when they married in succession without permission, they provided a very real example to others of what Elizabeth's reaction would be in such a situation.[144] Katherine Grey's marriage to Edward Seymour, son of the late Duke of

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[143] In a later chapter, I will be exploring Elizabeth's universally accepted and largely undeserved reputation for unreasonably hating marriage *per se*.

[144] Even Somerset, who is inclined to write off Elizabeth's reaction to marriage generally as irrational and inexplicable, refrains from criticizing the Grey sisters' treatments following their marriages: "If some have condemned the Queen's punishment of her cousins' marriages as unnecessarily vindictive, from the constitutional point of view her logic was impeccable". Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p. 60.

Somerset, was voided for lack of witnesses; she was imprisoned and separated from her husband. Her eldest son, however, was eventually allowed to claim his father's title of Earl of Hertford.

One of Goffman's most influential studies was based on several years' fieldwork in Saint Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington D.C.; this work is called *Asylums* and its first section outlines the characteristics of what Goffman called 'total institutions', "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life."[145] Although Goffman himself was principally studying prisons and insane asylums, one of the principal characteristics of total institutions that he enumerates is that of separation from ordinary community living: "the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant".[146] The total institution can be interpreted into a valuable metaphor for the royal household, and particularly for the women who were in service under Elizabeth. Unlike the men who populated Henry VIII's far less insulated privy chamber, Elizabeth's women were more directed in their duties, their charge being both to protect Elizabeth and to be protected by her. The maids of honour in particular lived together at court and slept together in public-school-style dormitories, "like sisters in an artificial family."[147] While the privy chamber's function was to provide a protective barrier for Elizabeth,[148] the chamber and Elizabeth herself did no less for these women in return, thereby isolating them not only from community life, but to an extent from the life of the court also:

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[145] Erving Goffman 1961 A/3, "The Underlife of a Public Institution: A Study of Ways of Making Out in a Mental Hospital". Extracts at http://www.mdx.ac.uk/WWW/STUDY/xgof.htm# Asylums, accessed 29 January 2007.

[146] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 4.

> A basic social arrangement in modern society is that the individual tends to sleep, play, and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an over-all rational plan. The central feature of total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres of life. First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled ... the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings ... Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution.[149]

Goffman also provides us with an opportunity to examine how Elizabeth's women were selected and with what aims and attitudes they approached service at court. As we have seen, several women garnered a natural promotion from Elizabeth's Hatfield household; some were appointed owing to kinship ties or friendships of long standing, such as the Dudley sisters. Some, such as Katherine and Mary Grey, were appointed in order to keep putative heirs or rival claims to the crown under close watch.[150] There are also examples of women being given to Elizabeth, such as Mary Radcliffe: her father Humphrey Radcliffe reportedly presented her, then aged ten years, as a New Year's gift to Elizabeth in 1561.[151] Mary had an unusual career at court, as she never married, and received an annual stipend of forty pounds from the Queen's purse. She was a particular favourite of Elizabeth's, and seems to have grown without regret into spinsterhood, as her mistress had done. The manner of Mary's appointment, however, should not necessarily be seen as more or less voluntary than those of Elizabeth's other women: the agency of such women regarding their appointments is impossible to gauge. Together they represent one of Goffman's means of conscription into the total institution, "where inmates are required to serve but are given much opportunity to feel that this service is a justifiable one required in their own ultimate interests."[152] It is safe, nevertheless, to assume that interest in acquiring a position in the privy chamber was unabated throughout the reign. As late as 1597, when a vacancy presented itself, Rowland Whyte – one of the most prolific correspondents and court gossips of the latter part of the reign – reported, "Here is already a whole dozen of ladies that would succeed [Lady Leighton]".[153] Thus the voluntary or involuntary nature of appointments is an issue of relatively minimal importance.

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[147] Paul E. J. Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31:1, p. 96.

[148] See Brown, "'Companion Me With My Mistress': Cleopatra, Elizabeth I and Their Waiting Women", in S. Frye and K. Robertson (eds), *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*; see also Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: the Competition for Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 104.

[149] Goffman, *Asylums*, p. 6. Goffman states explicitly here that he is speaking of 'modern' society, but as much can be said of early modern urban life outside the court as well. The analogy of the court to a total institution is, it must be remarked, an imperfect one, as "total institutions do not really look for cultural victory" (p. 13). In particular, the 'mortification' and stripping of identity that Goffman explains is critical to characterizing a total institution has limited application at best to the court.

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[150] Count de Feria, Spanish Ambassador at Elizabeth's accession, remarked on the relationship between Elizabeth and Katherine Grey in a letter to Philip II dated 24 March 1559: "... lady Catherine, who is a friend of mine and speaks confidentially to me, told me that the Queen does not wish her to succeed, in case of her (the Queen's) death without heirs. She is dissatisfied and offended at this, and at the Queen's only making her one of the ladies of the presence, whereas she was in the privy-chamber of the late Queen ... The present Queen probably bears her no goodwill. I try to keep lady Catherine very friendly, and she has promised me not to change her religion, nor to marry without my consent." *Calendar of Letters and State Papers – Spanish*, Vol. I: Elizabeth, 1558-1567 (London: Her Britannic Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892, 1971), p. 45.

[151] Simon Adams, "Radcliffe, Mary (1550-1617/18)'. *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[152] Goffman, *Asylums*, p. 118.

Although Mary came before her, Elizabeth's privy chamber, for its sheer longevity, provides a superior scope for examining the mechanisms of caring for a regnant queen. Unlike Henry VIII's privy chamber, which as a focal point of political faction was on several occasions deliberately purged and refilled so as to alter its composition entirely, Elizabeth's chamber remained static and stable throughout her reign, despite occasional convulsions. After the mass appointment at her accession, Elizabeth appointed individual women when vacancies presented themselves, yet such vacancies were relatively rare. Being one of Elizabeth's ladies was a career that was often life-long; throughout the entirety of her reign, the aggregate number of Elizabeth's paid women was only twenty-eight.[154] One need only consider that as many as seventeen salaried ladies held office at any one time to identify the chamber's slow turnover rate. Arguably, the single largest number of vacancies came from maids of honour who married and moved on to become unpaid Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber or Ladies of the Bedchamber. There was also a high rate of generational transfer within governing families: the daughters of, for example, Dorothy Stafford, Catherine Carey Knollys, and Anne lady Hunsdon were all ultimately appointed to the chamber. Expulsion or disgrace, while it did happen and is consistently rehearsed in literature on the privy chamber, did not constitute a crisis in the chamber, nor is it quantifiably significant.

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[153] Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney, April 27, 1597, Strand. *Historical Manuscripts Commission: Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle & Dudley Preserved at Penshurst Place*, Vol. II (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), p. 271.
[154] Wright, "A change in direction", p. 158.

Pam Wright uses the slow turnover rate in the privy chamber as an indicator of its "institutional and administrative regression" under Elizabeth.[155] She compares it to the Henrician chamber, turning that convulsive institution's very instability into a credit. While Elizabeth's chamber personnel did of necessity forfeit ostensibly political roles, the chamber as a concept did not undergo a decline of importance, and in fact took on new importance as an institution on political, aesthetic and performative levels: "an extension of her body for public display and ... a way to reinforce her remoteness and inaccessibility".[156] However, to prove the chamber's diminution by means of underscoring stable and arguably stagnant personnel is to ignore the fact that this trend was mirrored by the court itself, particularly within the privy council and amongst Elizabeth's favourites. This was especially true towards the end of Elizabeth's life; the post of Earl Marshal, for example, remained vacant for almost a decade, between 1590 and 1598, when Lord Burghley finally convinced the queen to appoint the Earl of Essex. Burghley himself had served Elizabeth since well before her accession, and in 1598, when he was almost eighty years old and could no longer walk, Elizabeth was refusing his offers of resignation while literally feeding him with a spoon.[157] Similar anecdotes can be found regarding the Queen's relationship to Robert Dudley, to Katherine Ashley, and to Catherine Carey, Countess of Nottingham, among others. The longevity of personnel affected court, council and household equally, and was identifiably a function of Elizabeth's personality rather than evidence of the chamber's disuse or relegation to the periphery of importance in court culture. Yet this did mean that the privy chamber was subject to the same pitfalls of low turnover as the council: namely, that the chamber became demographically bipolar over the course of the reign. Gentlewomen and Ladies of the Bedchamber, a number of whom served Elizabeth for forty years or more, aged along with her, while the maids of honour perforce remained the same age. By the end of the reign there was a marked vacuum of women older than twenty or younger than forty.

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[155] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[156] Brown, "'Companion Me With My Mistress': Cleopatra, Elizabeth I and Their Waiting Women", p. 134.

[157] This attachment often went hand-in-hand with hostility for a younger generation of politicians and courtiers: Conyers Read states that "In the same month in which Elizabeth boxed the ears of Essex and bade him go and be hanged, she sat by Burghley's bedside and fed him with a spoon." In Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 545.

It is in the late 1570s that one can begin to see Elizabeth's metamorphosis from young, marriageable queen into the iconographic Gloriana, whose image is most readily recognizable as the quintessence of the Elizabethan 'golden age' and the person of the Virgin Queen. This is the period in which she and her government began to achieve success in deliberately promulgating a specific image of Elizabeth; in years prior her portraiture was relatively conventional. Roy Strong remarks that "[the] portraiture of the first ten years of [Elizabeth's] reign is ... as tentative as her government. The politico-religious pressure demanding the projection of an image did not as yet exist and the notion of royal portraiture as loyalist propaganda had yet to be conceived."[158] The demands of Elizabeth's portraiture in the 1560s and 1570s were thus limited to projections of filial emulation, marriageability, and youth (as opposed to the agelessness that characterized the portraits of the Gloriana era). Elizabeth is not yet "alone in an airless world"[159]: in many images, she is decentred amongst her women, as in *The Royal Maundy* by Levina Teerlinc (c. 1565).

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[158] Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I*, pp. 60-61.

Perhaps the most quintessential image of Elizabeth during this era, however, is *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses* (c. 1569), not for its mythological symbolism, but because of the waiting women posed in the background. Elizabeth carries the usual *accoutrements* of sovereignty – namely an imperial crown, an orb, and a sceptre – but apart from these, she is indistinguishable from her women, not even physically elevated above them. This image more than any other expresses the relative camaraderie of Elizabeth's relationship to her intimates during the 1560s and 1570s. The "central contrast in the painting is not between Elizabeth and Venus, but between the dark, enclosed, formal world of the Tudor court, where the queen and her two gentlewomen are placed, and the bright pastoral world inhabited by the goddesses."[160] While the diametric contrast of "worlds" is an imperfect one – the scene outside the palace depicts an English countryside, and therefore the one "world" of the painting is Elizabeth's own – the grouping of Elizabeth with her women indicates a fundamental similitude between them that would be absent in later imagery, and recessed as well as the reality of their relationship evolved.

As the 1570s drew to a close it became increasingly foreseeable that Elizabeth would not marry, in spite of her last noteworthy courtship with the Duc D'Alencon of France in her mid-forties. It is at this juncture that her portraiture and her display begin to assume a strongly iconographic slant.[161] Strong marks the years 1579-1583 as the beginning of "the creation of the Elizabeth cult",[162] largely propelled by the reality that Elizabeth was, and inevitably would be, the last scion of the Tudor dynasty. Confidence in her sovereignty was now tied inextricably to the imperative of her seeming immortality. Coupled with her lack of progeny was the resurfacing of serious threats to her rule, which characterized the 1580s: before she could become Gloriana she was forced, for a time, to endure the crucible of acting the role of warrior queen. From the 1580s Elizabeth emerged hardened, fatigued, and increasingly isolated owing to her advancing age and the deaths of old friends, and the momentum of Gloriana iconography was all but irreversible. The "singleness, the physical, corporeal integrity that was her badge ... was not only expressed positively. It also underlay the exclusion she was empowered to impose on those who displeased her, and on the dismemberment she was able to inflict on those who opposed her."[163] The renewed innocence and confidence that had characterized the earlier part of her reign had given way, if only partially, to cynicism, and this new stance made itself felt within the privy chamber as well as without. The chamber did not, however, decline in either importance or, for that matter, efficacy, but it did undergo an evolution that altered Elizabeth's role to her women: where she had once been a mistress but also a friend, of an age with her women, she became in the approach to the 1590s a grandmother-figure and a true matriarch (and, as I will elaborate in the next chapter, an *ersatz* patriarch), a role that necessarily superimposed some measure of distance onto the straightforward intimacy that had previously typified the privy chamber.

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[159] Howarth, *Images of Rule*, p. 110.
[160] Susan Doran, "Virginity, Divinity, and Power: the Portraits of Elizabeth I", in S. Doran and T. Freeman (eds), *The Myth of Elizabeth*.

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[161] "Few scholars have pinpointed the shift from Elizabeth's early praise as a nubile virgin to her late adulation as a perpetual virgin, who remains ever youthful and attractive, during the course of the 1579-83 marriage negotations between the queen and the final suitor for her hand in marriage, François, duc Alençon (later duc d'Anjou)." John N. King, "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen." p. 32.

[162] Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I*, p. 107.

[163] Dennis Kay, "'She Was a Queen, and Therefore Beautiful': Sidney, His Mother, and Queen Elizabeth," *The Review of English Studies* 43:169 (1992), p. 22.

A functional description of Elizabeth's privy chamber personnel, pared to the essentials of who they were, how long they remained in office, and the space in which they moved and worked, is sufficient to refute the established historiographical notion that they were "a glorified domestic staff".[164] Their lack of official political capacity did not affect their spatial responsibilities as managers of access to the queen; to suggest that this role was unimportant by any measure is to deny Elizabeth herself as the focal point of her court, when her ideological and aesthetic self-fashioning was arguably unprecedented in form and magnitude: "the majority of those who had access to the court regarded the favour of the Queen as completely central to their existence".[165] The women of the privy chamber were in her company on an average day more than any other group or individual; they were given the charge of gauging her moods, acting as sources of her physical and emotional comfort, and managing her physical presence by both guarding her privacy and acting as extensions and amplifications of her public display.[166] In the absence of a husband or children, these women's spatial and emotional relationships to Elizabeth were both isolated and emphasized. Reaching beyond the narrow confines of faction and political office to the fundamental terms of their existence at court provides a hitherto unexamined foundation for a more theoretical and sociological analysis of the Elizabethan privy chamber's importance.

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[164] Adamson, *The Princely Courts of Europe*, p. 109.
[165] Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p. 64.
[166] See Johnson, *Elizabeth I*, pp. 195-202 *passim*.

Chapter Five

Maids and Materfamilias: Reinterpreting the Mythology of the Gay Nineties, 1588-1603

Until the 1580s, Queen Elizabeth had shared a critical characteristic with her maids of honour: she was marriageable. Indeed, "her marriageability was an essential element of her youthful image."[167] As she moved out of the marriage market and into later middle age, losing this commonality with her maids pushed her relationship to them into its final phase, during which Elizabeth became a true *materfamilias*, and social distance became an increasingly tangible feature of her household. In this chapter I will recontextualize Elizabeth's relationship to the maids of her privy chamber during the last period of her reign as one of a conscientious guardian to her charges, as opposed to a jealous peer, embittered by spinsterhood, who saw her maids as rivals. Such a viewpoint does not necessarily seek to rehabilitate Elizabeth's character in her last years, but rather to provide a new lens through which to view and understand her behaviour towards the *familia* she had gathered about her at her court.

Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn was given a fine European education, first as a maid of honour to Margaret of Navarre in the Netherlands, and later at the French court during the reign of François I. It was the Archduchess Margaret in particular who educated Anne about the virtue and honour of unmarried young women. Whether Margaret's teachings found their way directly to Elizabeth cannot be known, but the poem that Margaret recited to her young charges might as well have been written in Elizabeth's own hand to the maids of honour in her privy chamber during the long last decade of her reign:

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[167] John N. King, "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990), p. 39.

> *Trust in those who offer you service,*
> *And in the end, my maidens,*
> *You will find yourselves in the ranks of those*
> *Who have been deceived.*
> *They, for their sweet speeches, choose*
> *Words softer than the softest of virgins;*
> *Trust in them?*
> *In their hearts they nurture*
> *Much cunning in order to deceive,*
> *And once they have their way thus,*
> *Everything is forgotten.*
> *Trust in them?*
> *Fine words are the coin to pay back*
> *Those presumptuous minions*
> *Who ape the lover*
> *By fine looks and such like*
> *Not for a moment but instantly*
> *Give to them their pay –*
> *Fine words!*
> *Word for word, that is justice,*
> *One for one, two for two.*
> *They are gracious so to converse,*
> *Respond yourself graciously –*
> *With fine words!*[168]

Queen Anne in turn taught this same sentiment to her own maids of honour; and Elizabeth, half a century later, to hers. It is an ideology with which Elizabeth armoured herself during her adolescence and never ostensibly renounced, and the myriad sexual and marital complications that governed much of her movement both before and after her accession provide the historian with both texture and a rationale for what is seen as her unusual caution regarding the marriage of her maids.

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[168] As quoted in Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: 'the most happy'* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), pp. 21-2.

The period from the Earl of Leicester's death in 1588 to Elizabeth's own in 1603 is fraught and muddied with caricatures of a generationally bipolar court: Elizabeth herself was growing older, and so were her favourite ladies, councillors and courtiers.[169] Among these were their children and grandchildren, who had known no other sovereign than Elizabeth. When Elizabeth became queen at the age of twenty-five, her maids of honour were only slightly younger than she, and her gentlewomen, with the exception of Katherine Ashley and Blanche Parry, were of an age with her. During the 1590s the rota of her maids of honour was young enough to be her grandchildren. This distance of years was only reinforced by Elizabeth's spinsterhood and the iconography that grew around it. Her enforced solitude, while ultimately constituting a political *coup*[170], meant that her relationship to her intimates was altered over time. This thesis does not seek to dispute this widely-held historiographical claim; rather, I seek to uncover more plausible reasons for this change than the "notorious sexual jealousy" that is falsely at the centre of all analyses of Elizabeth during the last fifteen years of her reign.[171]

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[169] See Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays in Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 29: "The static nature of the Court was further compounded by Elizabeth's tendency to leave offices vacant or held jointly by one person for long periods of time. ... [A] vast gap was created between those, such as Burghley, Leicester, Hatton and – on a lesser scale – Heneage, who received the full benefit of Elizabeth's favour and those who did not."

[170] "[The] virginity of the queen was used as a powerful political weapon all through her reign." Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (1975), pp. 34-36, 78-9.

[171] Paul E. J. Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31:1, p. 81.

By the late 1580s, Elizabeth's perpetual virginity was certain, and this dovetailed necessarily with her public image. Anxiety over the succession would only be worsened by the spectre of an aging, barren woman: as such, throughout the 1590s, portraiture increasingly depicts a woman of surreal and superhuman proportions, *ex illo tempore*.[172] Francis Bacon suggested that "She imagined that the people, who are much influenced by externals, would be diverted, by the glitter of her jewels, from noticing the decay of her personal attractions."[173] Elizabeth in these later portraits is "conspicuously and hieratically elevated above strife and hurry ... she sits alone in an airless world."[174]

> Although Elizabeth frequently admitted the consequences of her aging, her iconographic response to the fear of premature burial was to claim herself ageless. The inherent claim was that her active virtue, so often particularized as her virginity or chastity, protected Elizabeth from the aging process, helping preserve her metaphoric fertility in the guise of a continuing physical fertility. Her represented denial of old age was an assertion of her political viability, an attempt to transcend her society's tendency to disparage and ignore any woman past childbearing age – without, however, challenging that prejudice.[175]

That her appearance suggests such otherworldliness – and, indeed, immortality – was not only the work of the artists she no longer sat for. It was this generation of ladies in waiting – the generation from which Elizabeth was most estranged – that had to be most expert with Elizabeth's appearance, for she could not only appear ageless in portraits: she must approximate this effect within her court as well. The driving force behind this increasingly intricate aesthetic construction was not, as many historians would have it, vanity. Elizabeth's airs are well-rehearsed, but recent scholarship in particular has put a practical emphasis on display. The conspicuous and unusual growth of Henry VIII's codpiece in portraiture, for example, was not an indicator of vanity *qua* vanity, but a specific message regarding his fecundity. In the same way, Elizabeth at once reverts to youth and is promoted to "something of a goddess"[176] by her portraiture, as well as by her own physical image when trussed up before the court. "What matters is not how the individual identifies him or herself but rather how he or she is identified by others."[177]

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[172] See Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I* (1987), p. 20: Elizabeth's sensitivity about her appearance "may not have reflected vanity so much as a genuine fear of the dangers inherent in dwelling on the physical mortality of the sovereign while the succession was unsettled."

[173] As quoted in Agnes Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 637.

[174] David Howarth, *Images of Rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 110.

[175] Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 100-01.

However, the fact remains that Elizabeth, in her sixties, was indeed a different mistress from the Elizabeth of the 1560s and 1570s. She was no longer marriageable; she had, by this point, been Queen for more than half her life. With the death of the Earl of Leicester she lost the last suitor who had been of an age with her: thereafter, the lovemaking efforts of Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Essex were burdened by a note of artifice, even if they did serve a specific purpose. There is an element of textuality to this evolution: where Elizabeth's virginity had once contributed to her marriageability, it now stood as testimony to her spinsterhood. "Elizabeth's most private, most secret, least knowable attribute was also her most public quality, and a recognized component of global political discourse."[178] Robert Dudley's death in particular forced the spectre of grandmotherhood on Elizabeth. With this came a renewed imperative of guardianship over her ladies and over her younger courtiers, one which she, as she always had, took seriously: "Since most young courtiers were physically distant from their parents during their residence at court, Elizabeth acted *in loco parentis*."[179] That she was a guardian and a marriage arbiter of her women was part and parcel of the advantage of being a maid of honour, not, as has been suggested, a disadvantage of the office.

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[176] Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I*, p. 20.

[177] Ann Branaman, "Goffman's Social Theory", in A. Branaman and C. Lemert (eds), *The Goffman Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. lii.

[178] Dennis Kay, "'She Was a Queen, and Therefore Beautiful': Sidney, His Mother, and Queen Elizabeth", *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 43 (1992), p. 21.

The men and women who were dying throughout the 1580s and 1590s were those with whom Elizabeth had built her government, and those who shared her emphatic stress on *Semper Eadem*, which Elizabeth adopted as her motto. With them she had a collective memory, and it is perhaps a testament to the success of her reign that the younger generation which she was forced to marshal in the last years of her life were as cavalier as they were in political, military, and sexual matters. Anthony Esler captures the ostensibly contradictory duality of opportunism and conservatism that characterised Elizabeth's own generation by providing an explanation so simple it is often overlooked:

> Under Henry VIII's sickly son and unfortunate daughter, men and movements that Henry's iron hand had barely held in check broke loose in an orgy of extremism and bloodshed. The mid-century years were years of ideological radicalism and reaction, of revolution, war, and economic disaster. Political instability was endemic. There were at least three major shifts in the center of political power during the decade 1547-1558 – from Somerset to Northumberland to Mary to Elizabeth. Each change of government was a time of trial and of real danger for England's ruling class.

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[179] Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", p 82.

> It was a nerve-wracking time to be alive, and the lessons it burned into young minds were never forgotten.[180]

By the time Elizabeth became Queen in 1558, Leicester was twenty-five, and William Cecil, later Baron Burghley, was thirty-eight. The convulsions of Henry VIII's final years and the two reigns that followed were livid memories for this first generation of Elizabeth's ministers, and go far in explaining the ideological gulf between their generation and the next: the sons and daughters of this generation were born into a stable ruling class and were forced to learn none of the lessons enumerated by Esler. Elizabeth was, by 1600, almost the last of this group left alive, and the lessons she sought to impart to her maids of honour, while no less practical or vital half a century later, were occasionally lost on a group of women who could not readily understand the restrictions placed on their behaviour. Thus the historian is faced with volumes of evidence of a court over which Elizabeth had lost control, of a minefield of sexual chaos and oblivion to authority. The very wealth of material available to historians is at issue; there is, for example, a hint of bias in Sir John Harington's memoirs, which are "underwritten by a playful, yet insistent misogyny". Harington equated worldly accomplishment in a woman with a talent for deception and a willingness to place a price on herself: "the female courtier ([and the queen] cannot but be implicated) is inevitably a whore."[181] Given such a predisposition, his recollections, while valuable, cannot be taken entirely at face value.

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[180] Anthony Esler, *The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation* (Durham, NC: 1966), p. 5.
[181] Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", pp. 228-9.

In attempting to find a seminal example of profligacy at the Elizabethan court of the 1590s, one is faced with almost too many possible selections; however, this wealth of examples should not be taken, *ipso facto*, to mean that profligacy was the defining characteristic of this court, nor indeed of the privy chamber. Linda Pollock recently came up against a similar problem when assessing the role of violence amongst the early modern nobility, and asserted that "[historians] know much more about the violent than the nonviolent elite. Rather than assuming that early modern men were inescapably prone to violence, we should reexamine the specific nature of disputes and the underlying reasons for them."[182] So too with the men and women who seem to establish Elizabeth's last years of tenure as a wanton era of disobedience. There is more information available to historians about the 1590s than there is for any preceding decade of Elizabeth's reign, and for this reason, making "firm pronouncements" about the characterization of these years, in contrast to those that came before, is a slippery proposition.[183] At issue as well is the primary source material available. It is difficult to know what passed between Elizabeth and her women behind the firmly closed door of the privy chamber: the challenge of historians is not dissimilar to that of the male courtiers who were just as eager to know, and just as debarred from access. The gossip-mongers of the era, while providing invaluable data, were neither completely privy to nor objective regarding activity within the privy chamber: "[such] male onlookers had an ambivalent perspective; they were ... envious of the ladies' power, delighted by their transgressions (betrayals of feminine frailty) ... The male courtier's attempt to undercut the pretensions of Elizabeth and her women should alert us to his lack of genuine control."[184]

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[182] Linda Pollock, "Honor, Gender, and Reconciliation in Elite Culture, 1570-1700", *Journal of British Studies* 46 (2007), p. 27.
[183] Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", p. 91.

It does seem almost beyond argument that this last era of Elizabeth's reign was one peppered with scandals, squibs, and petty rebellions, although it stretches credulity to suggest that these were the defining characteristics of the period. Moreover, introducing the greater context of European courts more generally at this epoch, one finds it increasingly difficult to lay the blame for such episodes solely at Elizabeth's door. The ethos of chivalry that had been re-energized in England by Henry VIII was going out of fashion by the late sixteenth century, giving way, to a concept of honour that "stressed instead the importance of humanism, Protestantism, service to the crown, temperance, wisdom, and godliness."[185] While the ideal did not always match the reality, the excesses of the English court in the 1590s continued to pale in comparison with continental trends at the time.[186] A sense of *fin-de-siecle* seemed to affect most European royal courts, with comparable results.

"Elizabeth's *annus horibilis* in terms of aristocratic concupiscence at court was undoubtedly 1591."[187] Elizabeth Southwell, a maid of honour, was found to be pregnant, either by Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, or by the brother of Anne Vavasour, another maid of honour whose career was short-lived owing to her having had a son by Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, a decade earlier. 1591 was also the year, although Elizabeth did not yet know it, that Sir Walter Raleigh married Elizabeth Throckmorton, another maid of honour and, more importantly, one of the Queen's wards. Later that year, yet another maid of honour, Katherine Legh, secretly married, owing to being pregnant; and by the end of the year, Elizabeth had lost almost half of her maids of honour, as well as the "mother of the maids", a Mrs. Jones, who was later replaced by a Mrs. Wingfield.[188] On the extant list of maids of honour from 1593, there are only four enumerated, as opposed to the usual complement of six or eight normally on the roster.[189]

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[184] Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", pp. 226-7.
[185] Linda Pollock, "Honor, Gender, and Representation in Elite Culture, 1570-1700", *Journal of British Studies* 46 (2007), pp. 3-4.
[186] *Ibid.*
[187] Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", pp. 89-90.

These snapshots do not represent all the scandals that reached beyond the ear of the court, nor were such episodes confined to the 1590s. Anne Vavasour's affair with the Earl of Oxford took place in the early 1580s; Laeticia Knollys's marriage to Robert Dudley was uncovered in 1578; and the clandestine marriages of Elizabeth's cousins Katherine and Mary Grey were features of the 1560s. Among these, several could be understood as personal affronts to Elizabeth: the marriage of Robert Dudley in particular has been famously rehearsed as a turning point in one of her closest relationships. However, the balance of the charges against these women and men can be deconstructed in reasonable terms. The Grey sisters were potential claimants to the throne through the Suffolk line; Katherine Grey in particular, having borne two sons, represented a threat to the crown, whether or not she intended to use it. However,

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[188] See Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen"; Cecil MS 20/65.

[189] See Alison Wall, "For Love, Money, or Politics? A Clandestine Marriage and the Elizabethan Court of Arches", *The Historical Journal* 38 (1995), p. 518.

Elizabeth had few known long-lasting grudges, and her colourful *ex tempore* outpourings on subjects such as clandestine marriages tended to be, more often than not, little more than talk.[190] Indeed, Mary Grey makes an appearance in the rolls as late as 1585, when she was given one hundred sixty pounds for 'faithful service'.[191]

There are two lines of attack at work when historians make use of the women who married secretly, or became pregnant, under Elizabeth's care. The first is that Elizabeth was unreasonable about marriage; the second is that as she grew older, she gradually lost control over the younger generation at court. Each of these allegations has some truth to it, and together do not necessarily constitute an indictment of Elizabeth's character or rule unless they are raised to the cartoonish proportions that are often suggested. Alison Wall proposes that the queen's alleged enmity to marriage was a constant poltergeist in the maids' negotiations, becoming exacerbated by secrecy, when in truth it was the secrecy itself that provoked Elizabeth's anger. "They [the maids of honour] were, after all," Wall remarks, "the vestal virgins."[192] This is one of the real misconceptions surrounding Elizabeth's maids of honour who, as has been asserted above, were placed into service at court owing specifically to the office's advantages in making honourable marriages. The term 'vestal', peppered throughout literature on this topic, suggests what is tantamount to perpetual servitude and chastity. The chastity required of maids of honour was a universally acknowledged precondition of their honourably unmarried state, not a requirement *per se* of serving the queen. Although it has been rightfully asserted that sexual chastity was not a woman's only means of attaining or maintaining honour during this period,[193] it was a critical component of the honour necessary to making a good marriage, and for this reason Elizabeth, as the guardian of her maids, attempted to ensure that the maidens' chamber protected that honour, through (temporary) chastity, but also by other means. By contrast, a Vestal interpretation of Elizabeth herself withstands scrutiny, particularly in the iconographic climate of the 1590s, as an "immortal virgin ... the unmoving, fixed center of family life, both human and divine", or "as keeper of the sacred flame that symbolized Rome's essential life force."[194] However the maids of honour themselves, by definition, did not serve Elizabeth in perpetuity, although, like Vesta's priestesses, they were charged with safeguarding the queen's honour in reciprocal manner, as the Roman myth suggests: "If ever the sacred fire of Vesta did go out, the negligent vestal was to be punished by scourging."[195]

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[190] For example, on the subject of Elizabeth's anger over Essex's marriage to Frances Walsingham, Philip Sidney's widow, John Stanhope, a gentleman of the privy chamber, wrote, "God be thanked, [she] doth not strike *all* she threats." Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 562.

[191] Wright, "A change of direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558[illegible] in S[illegible]key (ed), *The English Court*, p. 151.

[192] Alison Wall, "For Love, Money, or Politics?", p. 518.

The following passage can be seen as the quintessence of these charges against Elizabeth. Elizabeth Vernon, a maid of honour during the last part of the reign, attempted to hide her pregnancy by the third Earl of Southampton before he went (against Elizabeth's wishes) as part of the Earl of Essex's complement in Ireland. When the pregnancy was discovered, "the Queen lashed out in all directions":

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[193] See Pollock, "Honor, Gender, and Representation in Elite Culture, 1570-1700", p. 8.
[194] Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights* (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1998, 1995), pp. 128-9.
[195] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* XXV. 193/1 (1883).

> She threats them all to the Tower, not only the parties but all that are partakers in the practice. It is confessed that the Earl [of Southampton] was lately here and solemnized the act himself, and Sir Thomas German accompanied him on his return to Margate ... I now understand that the Queen has commanded that there shall be provided for the new Countess [Vernon] the sweetest and best appointed Chamber in the Fleet [prison]."[196]

In the event this did not turn out to be sarcasm or mere talk: Southampton and Elizabeth Vernon were, for a short period, committed to the Fleet, but it was indeed "the sweetest and best appointed chamber", and they were soon released, though not to return to court.[197] Southampton had been a ward of the court whose marriage fell under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Court of Wards, then William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Burghley had in 1589 proposed a marriage to Elizabeth Vere, his own granddaughter and a member of a powerful Protestant family, which Burghley believed would offset the dangerous Catholic taint on the Southamptons. Southampton refused the match, despite the fact that it cost him, upon his maturity, some five thousand pounds, the purported cost of Elizabeth Vere's dowry.[198]

Elizabeth (Bess) Throckmorton, a ward of the court who secretly married Sir Walter Raleigh in 1591, has been the subject of much historiographical attention in the examination of the queen's relationship to her maids of honour. Bess's transgression was a unique insult both to Elizabeth and to the maidens' chamber: finding herself pregnant, she and Raleigh quickly married, and Bess absented herself from court to give birth to her son. Following the birth, she returned to not only to court, but to her office as a maid of honour, concealing both matrimony and motherhood for more than a year before she was caught out and both she and Raleigh were committed to the Tower of London. Karen Robertson claims that the extreme measure of imprisoning the couple was Elizabeth's reaction to a feeling of having been abandoned by Bess whom, Robertson suggests, Elizabeth expected would serve her in perpetual virginity. There are only two examples of such service in the forty-four-year span of Elizabeth's reign, taking into account a constantly revolving roster of maids of honour: those of Blanche Parry and Mary Radcliffe, each of whom made independent decisions not to marry (and in the case of Blanche Parry, long before Elizabeth became Queen). There is no reason to suppose that Elizabeth hoped for such a sacrifice from Bess Throckmorton.

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[196] As quoted in Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 113.

[197] Park Honan, "Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton", *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[198] *Ibid.*

Robertson goes further, claiming that the incident "exposed the Elizabethan court display of virginity as simply a performance, thus casting a shadow on the queen's own claims of virginity."[199] Bess Throckmorton's behaviour was unique among the maids: although many examples can be found of surprise pregnancies and clandestine marriages, none other than Bess is recorded as having re-entered service as a maid of honour following delivery. That she was denied access to the court or a position in the privy chamber following such an incident should neither be surprising nor cited as an example of Elizabeth's irrationality regarding marriage. "In such cases, the couple had to expect punishment, just as they would for going against the wishes of their own parents."[200] This was especially true of Bess, who was a ward of the court as well as a maid of honour.

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[199] Karen Robertson, "Negotiating Favor: The Letters of Lady Ralegh", in James Daybell (ed), *Women in Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2004), p. 102.

Elizabeth acted *in loco parentis* for all of her maids, not only those who were wards of the state; the greater part of this guardianship was ensuring that they contracted proper marriages. For all the rumours, historiographical and contemporary, there is nothing to suggest that such marriages did not continue apace throughout Elizabeth's reign.[201] When Maria Touchet became a maid of honour in 1594, "Queen Elizabeth ... promised to find her a good husband"; in spite of this, Maria contracted a marriage to Thomas Thynne so secret that even Thynne's parents did not know about it. When they discovered it, they sought to annul it, and while they ultimately failed, Maria spent these years in a sort of purgatory, being "neither openly married, not marriageably single", and was forced to leave court.[202] The salient point here is that Elizabeth is seen here to take seriously her powerful role as marriage arbiter: she did not, as has been suggested, attempt to keep her maids in vestal virginity. Elizabeth understood that "she was in a position of trust towards them ... and had a positive duty to protect them from folly and imprudent unions."[203] In the case of Maria Thynne, Elizabeth's care in safeguarding her honour was all that was left to her in 1595: Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sydney that "Mrs. Touchet hath catcht Mr. Thinnes son and heir, to his father's mislike, for with her he shall have nothing but those virtuous qualities she brought from Court."[204]

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[200] Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", p. 82.

[201] See Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", p. 81: "The whole purpose of having maids of honor – aristocratic women of marriageable age ... who attended the queen and performed various minor tasks – was to educate them in the ways of the court and to help them obtain a good marriage. Most of the maids succeeded in this quest, and there are many examples which demonstrate that Elizabeth was quite happy, even eager, to advance what she regarded as suitable matches."

[202] Wall, "For Love, Money or Politics? A Clandestine Marriage and the Elizabethan Court of Arches"; see also Alison Wall, "Thynne (nee Touchet) Maria", *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[203] Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect*, p. 113.

It is in this prudence and care that Elizabeth can be seen as *materfamilias* of her privy chamber, and, indeed, happy endings of a sort are to be found amidst the stack of scandals that are used to characterize this period, even if they are less interesting. In 1585 the maid of honour Frances Howard was affianced to the Earl of Hertford,[205] and wrote to him:

> Many persuasions she [Elizabeth] used against marriage ... and how little you would care for me ... how well I was here, and how much she cared for me. But, in the end, she said she would not be against my desire. Trust me, sweet lord, the worst is past, and I warrant she will not speak one angry word to you.[206]

In this letter one can detect echoes of the Archduchess Margaret's poem, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Admittedly, the engagement was reportedly of almost ten years' standing; however, Elizabeth's cautions proved sound, and the marriage was an unhappy one.[207] Such anecdotes cause far less comment than those involving women being disgraced, expelled from court, imprisoned, or exiled on family estates, but they are more accurate in assessing Elizabeth's awareness of her own role as guardian. Having never married, it is too simple to expect that Elizabeth bore bitterness to those who did; more nuanced, and more relevant, is the suggestion that she bade her women exercise caution in the pursuit of marriage, as she herself had done, and with good reason. Compartmentalizing her life and her reign into specific eras does a disservice to Elizabeth's own ongoing and vivid memory, which was rife with examples of poor husbands, from her own father to Thomas Seymour to Robert Dudley himself, and the danger in which they left their wives – and, in Seymour's case, prospective wives.

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[204] *Historical Manuscripts Commission. Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de L'Isle and Dudley Preserved at Penshurst Place, Volume II* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), p. 186.

[205] Edward Seymour (1539-1621), widower of Katherine Grey, who had died in 1568.

[206] As quoted in Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (1974), p. 114.

[207] Rowland Whyte wrote to Robert Sidney on 12th November 1595, "It is credibly said Lady Hertford is become stark mad." De L'Isle and Dudley MSS Volume II, p 184.

Moreover, there are myriad suggestions in Elizabeth's own words and iconography that she did not flout the role of mother, despite never having married. As an example, to her Parliaments she played a rhetorical role that she had, in fact, borrowed from her sister Mary. It was an ingenious strategy, employed with equal skill and sincerity by both sisters, for a regnant queen to thread the needle of exercising power over men: "[the] invocation of a wedding ring and motherhood supplied a characteristically feminine twist ... It was both tough *and* tender, as only a woman could make it."[208] In response to one of the many petitions that she marry, Elizabeth said to her Parliament, "I assure you all that though after my death you may have many stepdames, yet shall you never have any a more mother than I mean to be unto you all."[209] And this was not the end of it. It was around the time that Elizabeth ceased to be a contender in the marriage market that she began to employ the pelican as one of her emblems in portraiture; during this same era, indeed, she began to be cast as a vestal virgin rather than as a marriageable one. The pelican was in its way a powerful symbol of maternity, and one unfettered by the business of courtship and marriage: the pelican is recorded in literature as "plucking its own breast to shed its blood to save its young."[210] Without children of her own, Elizabeth in particular had both practical and emotional motivations to see to the welfare of her women while taking a necessary interest in the optical impact that their behaviour had on themselves, on her, and on the court.

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[208] Starkey, *Elizabeth: The Struggle for the Throne*, p. 131.
[209] Marcus, Mueller, and Rose (eds), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, p. 72.

The team performance of Elizabeth and her women suggests in the first instance a group gathered about the centre, which was Elizabeth herself. In the second instance, however, they were a team in equal measure, each relying on the others for the quality of their performance. "Each teammate," Goffman writes, "is forced to rely on the good conduct and behavior of his fellows, and they, in turn, are forced to rely on him."[211] Elizabeth herself is the most vulnerable figure in this *montage*. Whereas the reputation of individual women could be secured and safeguarded simply by their own proper conduct, every breach of conduct on their parts redoubled to reflect on Elizabeth. Here one encounters a distinction that is almost impossible to identify: the difference between Elizabeth's emotional reactions to those closest to her; and her measures to ensure that her own honour, that of her women, and that of her court was maintained. It was not enough to ensure her own behaviour was beyond reproach: as *materfamilias*, she was required to oversee the behaviour of her women as well.

It should also be noted that the matter of honour was not only Elizabeth's concern, but an early modern courtly concern more generally:

> Honor could be an unsettling force, but for the most part it enhanced social cohesiveness and communality. Honor gave an individual dignity and worth, supplied a model for behavior, and provided a connection to

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[210] Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I*, pp. 80-83.
[211] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 82-83.

> others. ... The landed ranks lived amid a constant chiding chorus of admonitions. Women and men accepted scrutiny from society because they themselves minutely examined the behavior of their peers ... it was part of an ethos of communal society, which prescribed that all work together to help support the honor and reputation of those with whom one was connected."[212]

Elizabeth required her privy chamber to be a cocoon free from bias or faction, a nearly impossible proposition when one considers the family and kinship networks that radiated from the women who were employed there. "As women, her Ladies could not be faction leaders; while as members of her *familia* they were not even faction followers either: their first loyalties were to the queen, not to one of her great men."[213] Such ostensible distance from the *melee* of court politics played a vital role in establishing Elizabeth 'above the fray' in 'an airless world', and consolidated the Privy Chamber as a barrier for herself from the rest of the court. Indeed, when the Parliament of 1593 made its traditional request, which included access to her person, the response they received was this: "As for the privilege of access to her presence, that was wholly to depend on the importance of the occasion, and her Majesty's leisure."[214] In this role, then, the privy chamber did not retreat "into mere domesticity."[215] Rather, it formed a guard around the queen by which access was carefully controlled, and created the illusion of "a private sphere apart from politics,"[216] an illusion that itself had powerful political implications, given that such a sphere could not, by definition, exist within the structure of a royal court. As with all simulacra, the casting of the privy chamber as "the inner sanctum of the court"[217] was a surface manifestation, a careful construction. The language of semiotics is appropriate here: "When one supposedly moves from signifier to signified, sign to meaning, one merely moves from one surface to another ... There is no outside."[218] However, the difference between one 'surface' – the 'public' world of the court – and another – the 'private' world of the privy chamber – was vital, even if illusory. Elizabeth's women were conscripted into this illusion and given the responsibility of its maintenance, thus providing them with a political role *per se*. Jean Baudrillard similarly illustrated the real power of simulacral construction and governance by its agents, in this case, the women Elizabeth appointed to her chambers: "A whole imaginary based on contact, a sensory mimicry and a tactile mysticism, basically ecology in its entirety, comes to be grafted on to this universe of operational simulation, multi-stimulation and multi-response."[219] Given this heavy task, the behaviour of the women in the privy chamber became of paramount importance, as the dishonour of any of the women in question was, by extension, a dishonour of the office to which they had been appointed, and constituted a breach of the Privy Chamber's intended impregnable borders.

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[212] Pollock, "Honor, Gender, and Representation in Elite Culture, 1570-1700", p. 28.
[213] Wright, "A change in direction", p. 159.
[214] As quoted in Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 580.
[215] Wright, "A change in direction", p. 150.
[216] Brown, "'Companion Me with My Mistress': Cleopatra, Elizabeth I and Their Waiting Women", p. 132.

It can also be argued that this very role attracted the sort of attention that could lead to infractions: "The queen's body servants were as much of a barrier to male courtiers as the walls and doors of the privy chamber, and accordingly they became a focus of intense interest."[220] There is often an uncomfortable contrast made between the Henrician privy chamber and the Elizabethan one, and the crux of it is that Henry's Chamber was the locus of political interest, and a realm to which all powerful men at court had access. Elizabeth's chamber was by contrast buttressed against political interest, and all but a few male courtiers, as well as ministers, were on the outside looking in, but this did not alter the situation of the chamber in relation to the structure of the court: it continued to control access to the sovereign. The control of access and the control of display went hand in hand and thus could not be divorced from one another: when one function failed, so too did the other. Perhaps the most popular example of this dual mechanism from the 1590s is the Earl of Essex's departure without leave from his post as Lord Deputy in Ireland: wishing to give his version of the controversial recent events there to Elizabeth before his enemies could, he raced to Nonsuch, where Elizabeth was in residence, and made way to her privy chamber, "all breathless, disordered, and travel-stained, as he was, his very face being covered with spots of mud."[221] Not finding her there, he allegedly went further, finding her in her bedchamber, "at her morning toilet, undighted and uncoifed, in the most mortifying state of disarray, with her thin grey locks, dishevelled and hanging about her haggard countenance".[222]

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[217] Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", p. 226.
[218] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, "The Class of 1968 – Post-Structuralism *par lui-meme*", in J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (eds), *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 343.
[219] Jean Baudrillard, "Symbolic Exchange and Death", in J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (eds), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, p. 496.

Such a scene provokes a myriad of questions. How did Essex get past the guard at each of Elizabeth's doors? The privy chamber, although a closed area, was not closed to all,[223] and Essex, being chief amongst Elizabeth's favourites, would likely have had access to all but her bedchamber, and his purported desperation likely pushed him past that barrier. The second question is one of which constituted the greater offense: Essex presenting himself before the queen in such a state of disarray; or his breach into this female realm, into this backstage in which the queen was, quite literally, not yet in costume. This event, if it took place as recounted by historians such as Agnes Strickland and contemporaries such as Sir Robert Cecil, is eerily like the series of intrusions to which Thomas Seymour subjected Elizabeth in her adolescence. The difference between these two incidents is not one of vulnerability, but rather the reason for vulnerability: by invading Elizabeth's bedchamber, Seymour threatened Elizabeth's display of virtue; by doing the same, fifty years later, Essex threatened her display of youth and immortality. Again, vanity is only a bystander in this narrative. More important was the breach of the backstage, which forced Elizabeth in both instances to reconcile her putative role with the reality that confronted each of these men. In Essex's case, Elizabeth distanced herself from the old and under-dressed woman that Essex saw by an *impromptu* display of regal grace: she allowed him to kiss her hand, and promised him a subsequent interview an hour later, "after *he* had changed his dress",[224] thereby deflecting attention from her own state of undress. Re-established as Gloriana later that day, Elizabeth was far better equipped to criticize him for his conduct in Ireland, and it was after this that he was placed under house arrest, denied his monopolies, and eventually moved to the rebellious squib that led to his trial and execution. Elizabeth had also, to her advantage, given Essex a false sense of security: "When a person senses that he is in face, he typically responds with feelings of confidence and assurance. ... He feels some security and some relief – as he also can when the others feel he is in the wrong face but successfully hide these feelings from him."[225]

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[220] Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", p 226.
[221] Agnes Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 644.
[222] *Ibid.*, p. 645.

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[223] Strickland suggests that the *entrée* to Elizabeth's more private apartments was, apart from her Ladies of the Bedchamber, confined to Robert Dudley, Christopher Hatton, Essex, the lord admiral (presumably William Howard), and Walter Raleigh. By the time of this incident, Hatton and Robert Dudley had both died. See Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 547.

[224] Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 644 (emphasis added).

Goffman suggests another lens through which to view this incident, and the events that followed: "The line maintained by and for a person during contact with others tends to be of a legitimate and institutionalized kind".[226] Interactants, in short, tacitly understand the rules of social engagement appropriate to a given situation. Essex was not only a man in a female realm, but a man also not prepared for court appearance, let alone a daylight charge into the queen's bedchamber. It is difficult to assess whose disadvantage was the greater in this scenario. However, in such a situation all present will perform in such a way as to diminish the breach of etiquette, thus resolving social discomfort. As such Elizabeth, not yet ready to receive visitors, being as she was in a backstage region to which only her ladies had access, asserted a regal mantle that was at odds with, but ultimately superseded, her physical appearance and state of unreadiness. For Essex, however, such recovery was more difficult. "His coparticipants," Goffman writes, "are not likely to be conscious of the character of many of [his known attributes] until he acts perceptibly in such a way as to discredit his possession of them; then everyone becomes conscious of these attributes and assumes that he willfully gives a false impression of possessing them."[227] Thus an audience – in this case, Elizabeth and her ladies – will give a performer every chance, every benefit of the doubt in asserting situationally appropriate behaviour. In the case of Thomas Seymour such backward-bending effort meant thwarting Seymour's actual purpose during his raids of Elizabeth's bedchamber by presenting a diorama of piety and maiden virtue, thus diluting Seymour's situationally inappropriate performance.

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[225] Goffman, "On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction," in *Interaction Ritual: Two Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1967), p. 8.
[226] *Ibid*., p. 7.

The incident with Essex in 1599 is a sharp example of the interaction between Elizabeth and her *familia* more generally when rules of conduct were in breach. The symbiosis of obligation and expectation inherent in deference relationships is present not only between queen and courtier or queen and servant, but native to families and household situations also, in which hierarchies and structural social pathways are equally necessary and applicable. It is critical here to articulate the difference between deference, which was what Elizabeth demanded, and submission, which, as "the asymmetrical display of power", serves to create the illusion that the women of Elizabeth's privy chamber – and, by extension, her entire court – were indentured servants in thankless positions. Deference, by contrast, contributes to the maintenance of reciprocal social guidelines, and is given and received by consensus.[228]

In allowing for Elizabeth's multiple roles and performances, she can be seen not only as a queen with the specific deference obligations owed to such a personage, but as a mistress and governess, a maternal figure, and even, in contemporary terms, as a figurative patriarch. While such a comparison may seem counterintuitive, Elizabeth's position granted her many of the same rights and privileges conferred upon a husband at the time of marriage, wherein "authority proceeded from [her] condition."[229] David Cressy considers the implications of marriage at some length: "Marriage assigned new privileges, advantages, and obligations. It redefined social and sexual roles, rearranged patriarchal obligations, and conferred new duties of status, authority, and dependency. ... Through marriage their relationship to domestic authority became transformed. ... Marriage for a man meant autonomy, mastery, responsibility, and the prospect of fathering a lineage."[230] This enumeration of the bachelor's transformation into a husband and patriarch mirrors Elizabeth's promotion to the crown almost exactly, and sums up not only her obligations to her kingdom and people, but more specifically and poignantly to her court and those individuals closest to her. Thus her more intimate courtiers, and her women in particular, were not only beholden to the regulations of deference and demeanor by the structures and strictures of the royal court, but more immediately by the patriarchal authority of the head of their household, Elizabeth.

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[227] Goffman, "On Face-Work", p. 7.

[228] See Peter Manning, "Trust and the Rules of Social Interaction", in *Erving Goffman and Modern Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 75.

Breaches of obligation and expectation did not as such only take the form of incidents of sexual incontinence such as clandestine marriages or pregnancies. Equally threatening were open rejections of Elizabeth's authority, as in the case of Mary Howard, a maid of honour enamoured of the Earl of Essex and resentful of the monopoly that Elizabeth seemed to exercise on his lovemaking campaigns. Her response was to shirk her duties as a member of the queen's household, and the innermost circle of the household at that. A letter to Sir John Harington dated May 1597 states that

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[229] David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 287.
[230] *Ibid.*

> I have not seene her Highness, save twice, since Easter last, both of which times she spake vehemently and with great wrathe of her servante, the Ladie Marie Howarde, forasmuche as she refused to bear her mantle at the house her Highnesse is wontede to air in the garden, and on small rebuke did vent suche unseemlie answer as did breede much choler in her mistresse. Again, on other occasion, she was not ready to carry the cup of grace during the dinner in the privie-chamber, nor was she attending at the hour of her Majestie's going to prayer. All whiche dothe now so disquiet her Highnesse, that she swore she wold no more shew her any countenance, but out with all such ungracious flouting wenches.[231]

In this instance it is clear that Elizabeth's irritation is not so much with Lady Howard's flirtation with Essex as it is with the maid's willful ignorance of her duties, which served both practical and deferential, optical purposes. "I have made her my servant," Elizabeth reportedly said to William Fenton, "and she will now make herself my mistress; but, in good faith, William, she shall not, and so tell her."[232] It is obvious as well that Elizabeth's reaction was not seen as unreasonable by her contemporaries; Fenton exhorted Mary Howard "to be more dutiful, and not absent at prayers and meals, to bear her Highness' mantle and other furniture, even more than all the rest of the servants, to make ample amends by future diligence, and always to go first in the morning to her Highness' chamber, forasmuch as such kindness will much prevail to turn away all former displeasure." He also asks that she "be less careful in attiring her own person, for this seemeth as more done to win the earl than her mistress."[233] This last can be seen as an example of Elizabeth's sexual jealousy, but is in fact quite another matter. Sumptuary considerations and matters of physical decoration were of paramount importance at the early modern royal court: a maid of honour's clothing and physical presentation, as a cultural and practical imperative, were to be commensurate with her station. Unmarried ladies at court, including Elizabeth herself, wore low-cut gowns, particularly towards the end of the century, and to this Elizabeth had no objection, although such dress might seem sexually suggestive. It was rather the richness of dress that offended. Harington's memoirs recall an incident in which Elizabeth felt that one of her women was dressing above her station:

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[231] As quoted in Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", p. 82.
[232] As quoted in Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 558.

> One day the queen did send privately, and got the lady's rich vesture, which she put on herself, and came forth the chamber among the ladies; the kirtle and border was far too short for her Majesty's height; and she asked every one, How they liked her new-fancied suit? At length, she asked the owner herself, 'If it was not made too short and ill-becoming?' – which the poor lady did presently consent to. 'Why then, if it become not me, as being too short, I am minded it shall never become thee, as being too fine; so it fitteth neither well.' This sharp rebuke abashed the lady, and she never adorned her herewith any more.[234]

Such an anecdote should be seen as an object lesson on decorum and decoration, if an eccentric one, rather than an arbitrary temper tantrum. In such a light one can imagine an *ersatz* family situation in the privy chamber, with Elizabeth at its head, and the women appointed there owing loyalty first to the *familia* constructed by Elizabeth, while their own families, often at court themselves, became secondary priorities.

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[233] *Nugae Antiquae; being a miscellaneous collection of original papers by Sir John Harington ... and others ...* Henry Harington (ed) (1769), Vol I, p. 232.
[234] As quoted in Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip", p. 227.

Breaches of etiquette, decorum, or protocol, be they of whatever nature, menaced all parties involved by upsetting mutually accepted structures of social interaction. When such a breach occurs, "two individuals run the risk of becoming discredited: one with an obligation, who should have governed himself by the rule; the other with an expectation, who should have been treated in a particular way because of this governance. Both actor and recipient are threatened."[235] The imperative to correct such breaches is a reciprocal one, benefiting not only the one to whom deference is required, but all parties. The corrective process is an effort to "re-establish a satisfactory ritual state" among social interactants. In rebuking her maid of honour's style of dress, Elizabeth addressed an act "through whose symbolic component the actor shows how worthy he is of respect or how worthy he feels others are of it", and so restored the social order most beneficial to both offender and offended.[236]

The harbinger of Elizabeth's death was an inextricable feature of the events that shaped the English court of the 1590s.[237] Her age and experience created a social distance between herself and her court, and her authority was inevitably undermined by the spectre of James VI waiting in Edinburgh for the news that he was King of England. Nevertheless the privy chamber remained constant, despite the incidents that peppered the decade and made it more interesting for historians and court gossips alike. It was still seen as a *coup* for a family or faction to have one of their own in the privy chamber: Rowland Whyte wrote, at some point after 1601, "My Lady Katerin Howard is come to court, and this day sworn of the privy chamber, which doth greatly strengthen that party."[238] Party politics notwithstanding, the privy chamber took on if anything an increased importance as Elizabeth's death approached in earnest. Sir John Harrington, Elizabeth's godson and an enthusiastic court correspondent, wrote that the Queen during the last years of her life was 'a lady shut away in her chamber', and while ministers and male courtiers tended to the succession as Elizabeth lay on her deathbed, it was her ladies – two of them, Catherine and Philadelphia Carey, having been maids of honour at Elizabeth's accession in 1558 – who kept vigil in the bedchamber at Richmond, and who alone were able to interpret Elizabeth's signs and gestures when she could no longer speak.[239]

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[235] Goffman, "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," *Interaction Ritual*, p. 51.
[236] Goffman, "On Face-Work ", in *Interaction Ritual*, p. 19.
[237] Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen", p. 93: "This younger generation of courtiers grew up with the constant expectation that the queen must soon die."

Elizabeth's interpretation of role and self-performance necessarily altered and evolved over the course of her reign, and her *familia* in 1558 was very different from that which surrounded her in 1603. Not only had the population of the court and privy chamber changed several times over, but Elizabeth's own place within the body of the chamber evolved as well. While she began and ended her reign as a governess over her chamber, she had in her twenties and thirties also played the role of sister and friend to her ladies. By the 1590s such a role was inappropriate: the critical deaths of Robert Dudley – her last and most serious suitor at court – in 1588, and Blanche Parry, originally her wet-nurse and ultimately the Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, in 1589, made her a true orphan at last. Blanche Parry had been the grandmother of the privy chamber, and with her death, that role fell to Elizabeth. It was a role that was inextricably infused with the rise of Gloriana. As her reign drew to a close, the distance between Elizabeth's 'front region' and her 'backstage' reached a peak. As Goffman has written, "*Role-segregation* may be facilitated by *audience-segregation*, so that those who figure in one of the individual's major role-sets do not figure in another, thereby allowing the individual to possess contradictory qualities."[240] It was an open secret during this period that Elizabeth was, in reality, an old woman who had left an irredeemable vacuum in the succession. Her people hid their anxiety gamely enough: a presentation to Elizabeth on her last progress, in 1602 to Harefield Place, featured Time "with clipped wings and a stopped hourglass" in deference to her putative immortality.[241] Before the court, her appearance took on a compensatory superhuman quality as agelessness became a necessary feature of her self-presentation. "To subject the sovereign to time," after all, "was to undermine the symbolic fiction of absolutist practice as occurring in an *ex illo tempore*, divine dimension from which it gained its putative authority."[242] This role distance demanded a schizoid performance from her ladies as they traversed from their familial and factional entanglements in the court to the inner sanctum of Elizabeth's bedchamber. These women were entrusted with imbuing Elizabeth with a patina of immortality, a task that became increasingly difficult even as it became more crucial to the queen's display. That there was a demographic and social distance between Elizabeth and her maids of honour during this period, less detectable in previous years, is beyond doubt. Nevertheless this distance did not jettison the utility of the privy chamber, nor did it mean that Elizabeth had foregone intimacy with all of her women even during the last years of her life. During her last visit to Hampton Court in 1599, she was spied "dancing a Spanish Panic to a whistle and tabor, none being with her but my Lady Warwick".[243]

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[238] Strickland, *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*, p. 615.

[239] Robert Carey recalls that on her deathbed, "The Queen made a sign with her hand. My sister Scrope [Philadelphia Carey], knowing her meaning, told the Bishop the Queen desired he should pray still." F.H. Mares, editor, *Memoirs of the Life of Robert Carey, Baron of Leppington and Earl of Monmouth* [1626] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1792), p. 60.

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[240] Goffman, "Role Distance", in *Encounters*, pp. 90-91.

[241] Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 128.

[242] Daniel Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I." *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997), p. 180.

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[243] Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, p. 101. Lady Warwick was Anne Russell, appointed as a maid of honour in 1558 at the age of ten. Anne married Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, in 1565, and went on to served as a Lady of the Bedchamber until Elizabeth's death. She outlived Elizabeth by less than a year, dying on 9th February 1604.

Conclusion:

Family or Familia? Royal Kinship and Intimacy at the Elizabethan Court

Elizabeth's *familia* in its various incarnations is a recognizable feature of her life from her childhood onwards. It came into bold relief when she found herself in danger, and illuminated the extraordinary position forced upon her by the circumstances of her birth, by her gender, and by the events – political and familial – that characterized the first twenty-five years of her life. Elizabeth's household was, for the most part, a model of consistency that defied the convulsive political climate of her adolescence. After her accession, her household and the intimates within it served to provide the same protective cocoon around Elizabeth that had been so necessary during her years as Princess. That she did not marry meant that her *familia* retained its importance throughout her lifetime, being subordinated neither by a consort nor by children.

Elizabeth's women and intimate friends were not only companions to a woman with whom it was uniquely difficult to share intimacies. They also stood as guardians of her reputation and her honour, as physical protectors of access to her person, as craftspeople in the construction of her appearance, and as messengers of her regal display. As such it is necessary to look beyond political office in order to get closer to a truer picture of Elizabeth's court, as well as of her reign and character. Her privy chamber was not staffed by domestics *per se*, but by critical power-brokers within the court, and by those to whom Elizabeth shared the greatest physical proximity, forming unprecedented cultural structures and connections at the English court.

It was Henry VIII's privy chamber that first excited interest in the "politics of intimacy" that was a reality of the early modern English court. During Henry's reign the offices of privy chamber and privy council bled together to the point that one was essentially a conduit to the other. Elizabeth's interpretation of these offices was radically different, owing both to necessity and to preference. She used her privy chamber as a vehicle for intimacy as well as an amplification of her display: her cousins and close friends found a home there, and this was a feature of the chamber that remained consistent throughout her reign.

The role of the privy chamber at the Elizabethan court has suffered from misinterpretation largely because Elizabeth treated the office of the privy chamber and the women within in a fashion that was entirely consistent with her treatment of more directly political offices and the men who occupied them. That the office had a slow rate of turnover, that she left positions vacant for long periods, that she clung to her intimates and was reluctant to embrace change were features of Elizabeth's privy council as much as her privy chamber. Far from diminishing the importance of the privy chamber or the women who held office there, these facts underscore the unique intimacies that Elizabeth shared with her women, putting them on a parallel with the better-rehearsed relationships she had with her leading councillors and courtiers. By the same token, the office itself should not be underestimated: the privy council is not retroactively imbued with diminished capacity simply because councillors held office for long periods of time, or because she favoured certain councillors above others. The privy chamber proved a critical locus for the members of Elizabeth's *familia*, not only the women who held office there, but the ministers and favourites who, over the course of her reign, enjoyed rights of *entrée*.

Exploring these physical spaces and those who were permitted to move within them provides critical insights into the culture of the court, and into the roles that Elizabeth evolved into and out of over the course of her life. It is in these men and women that the historian can see Elizabeth's succession of roles reflected: they provide the social surfaces against which Elizabeth was able to actualize the life-cycle performances that were denied to her by her position. Through her *familia*, Elizabeth acted the part of daughter and sister in ways that were not possible with her natural family; and she became lover, mother, and grandmother to her intimates as she grew older. That she isolated her privy chamber from the rest of the court – or attempted to – is testimony of its importance, not its diminution.

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Illustrations

Figure 1. Princess Elizabeth, attributed to William Scrots, 1546. Elizabeth is shown here at three-quarter length in full regalia, while giving an air of piety, modesty, learning, and marriageability.

Figure 2. Lucas de Heere, *The Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, presented to Elizabeth by Sir Francis Walsingham in the early 1570s. Henry VIII is in the centre of the image, flanked by Edward VI kneeling next to him; King Philip and Queen Mary are shown on the left followed by Mars, the god of War. Elizabeth, while decentred, is at the forefront of the image, followed by Peace and Plenty.

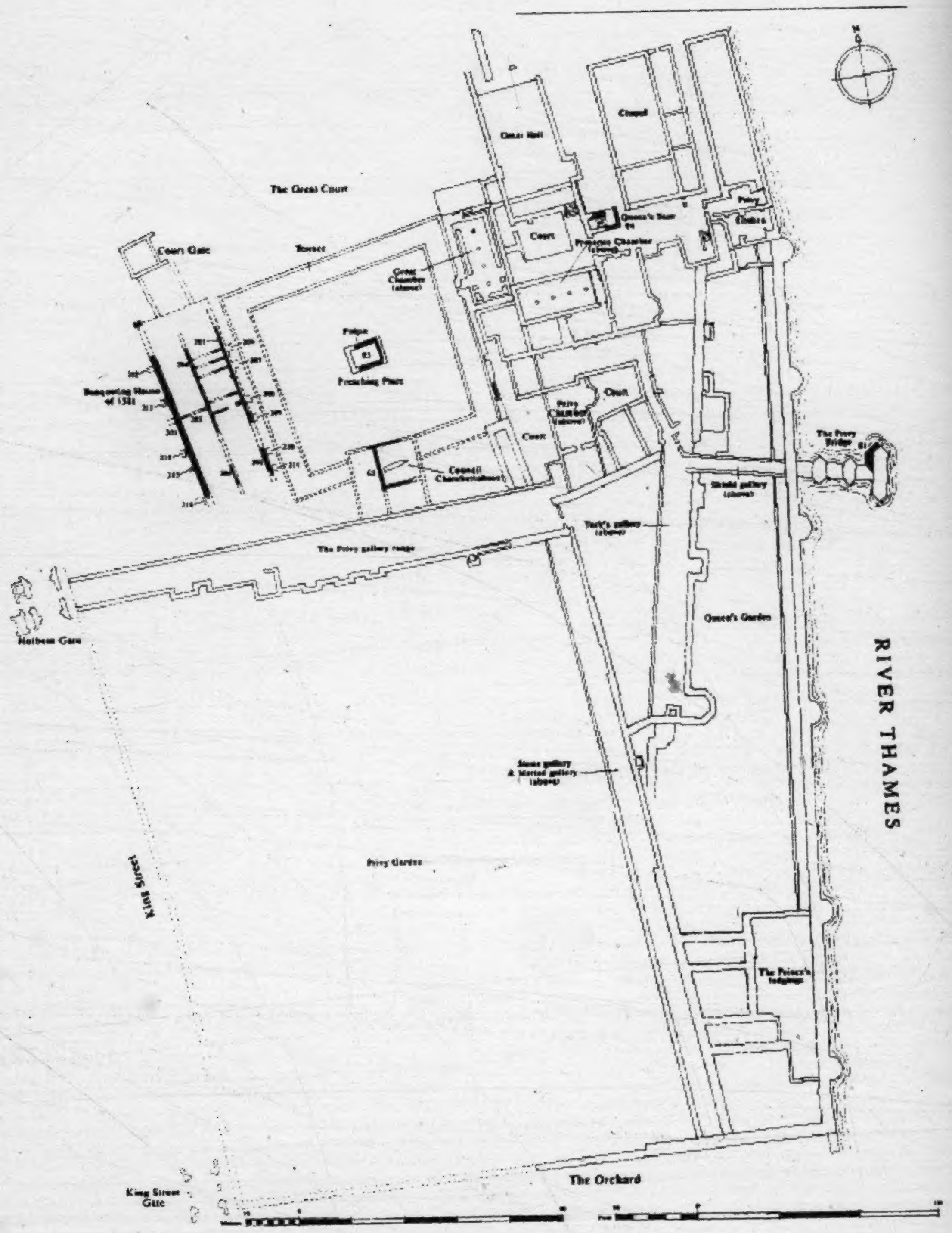
N
Great Hall
Chapel
The Great Court
Court Gate
Terrace
Great Chamber (above)
Court
Queen's Stair
Presence Chamber (above)
Privy
Closet
Pulpit
Preaching Place
Banqueting House of 1581
Privy Chamber (above)
Court
Court
Council Chamber (above)
The Privy Bridge
Shield gallery (above)
York's gallery (above)
The Privy gallery range
Holbein Gate
Queen's Garden
RIVER THAMES
Stone gallery & Matted gallery (above)
Privy Garden
King Street
The Prince's lodgings
The Orchard
King Street Gate

Figure 3. Whitehall Palace, floor plan, 1558-1603.

Figure 4. *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, 1569.

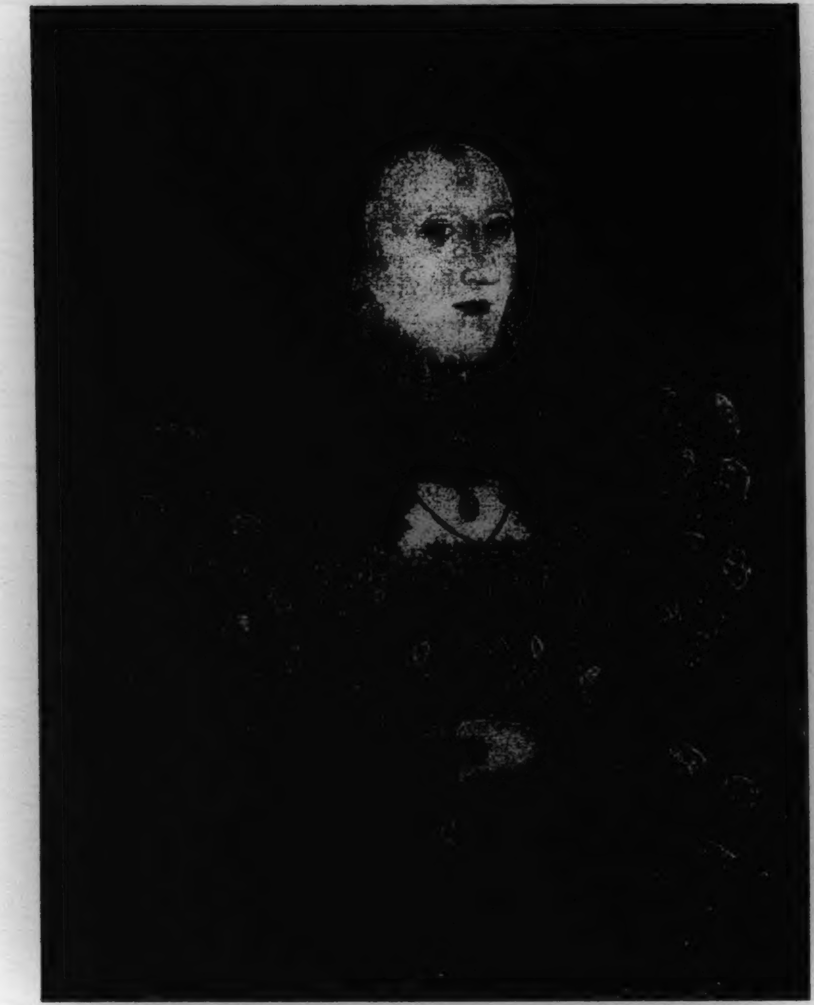

Figure 5. The Pelican Portrait, attributed to Nicholas Hilliard, ca. 1575-80. This is one of the first truly iconographic portraits of Elizabeth I. The pelican is seen here as a symbol of *ersatz* maternity, plucking its breast to feed its young.

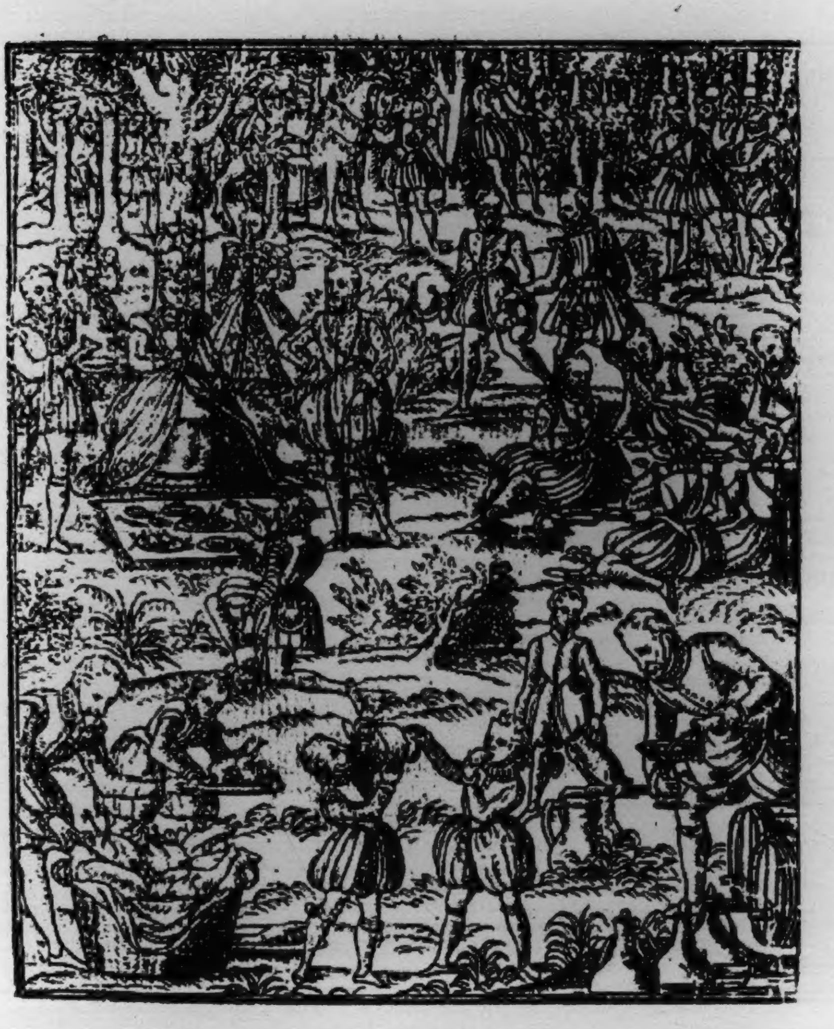

Figure 6. Elizabeth I at a Picnic, from *The Booke of Hunting*, ca. 1576. Once again Elizabeth is decentred in a group, but is easily identifiable, flanked by her women.

Figure 7. *The Armada Portrait*, attributed to George Gowers, ca. 1588-9. This portrait shows Elizabeth at the age of fifty-five; this era marks the true beginning of Elizabeth's agelessness in imagery.

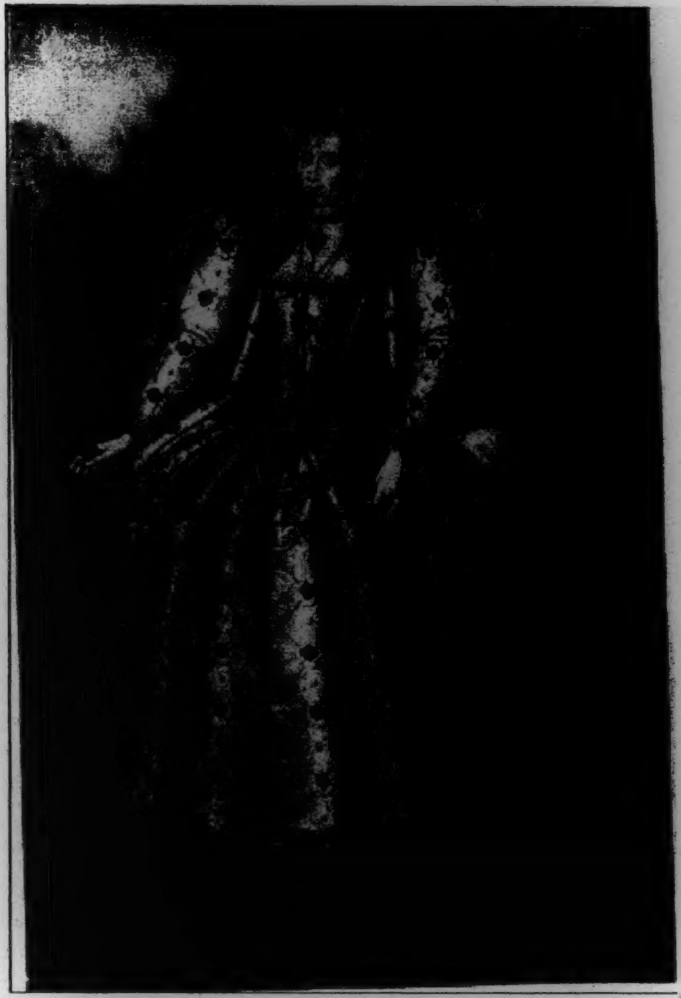

Figure 8. The Ditchley Portrait, Marcus Gaerhaerts the Younger, ca. 1592. This portrait, commemorating a visit to Oxfordshire, shows Elizabeth appearing increasingly superhuman.

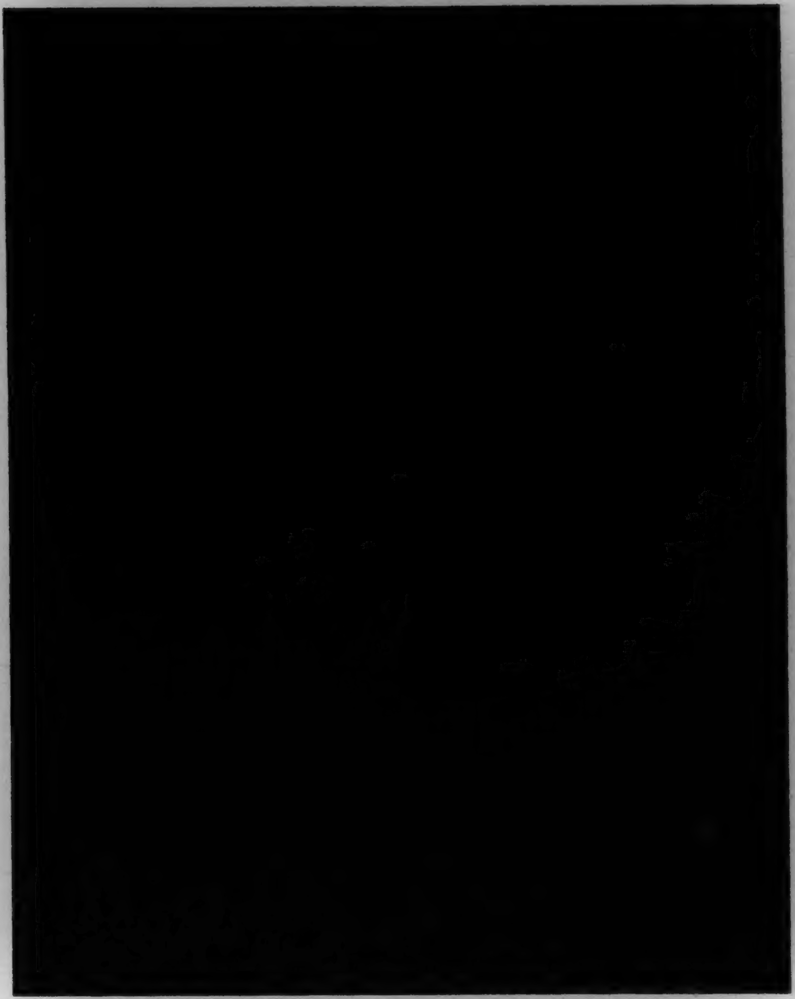

Figure 9. The Rainbow Portrait, Isaac Oliver, ca. 1600. Depicted here as Astraea, Elizabeth was in 1600 in her late sixties.